

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1891.

THE RISE OF BRITISH DOMINION IN INDIA.¹

IN undertaking to address you on the rise of the British Dominion in India, I assume that the principal incidents and transactions of Anglo-Indian history are fairly well-known. I shall endeavour to set before you broadly, and as briefly as possible, the general causes, the principal lines and conjunctures of events, which have combined to bring about such a remarkable climax as the establishment of a first-class European Power in Southern Asia, and the union of two hundred and seventy millions of Asiatics in fellow citizenship with ourselves under the sovereignty of the English Crown.

I venture to affirm at the beginning that the relations between India and England constitute a political situation unprecedented in the world's history. The two countries are far distant from each other, in different continents; they present the strongest contrasts of race and religion. I know no previous example of the acquisition and successful government of such a dependency, so immense in extent and population, at such a distance from the central power. A State that is distinctly superior to its neighbours in the arts of war and government has often expanded into a great empire. In Europe the Romans once united under an extensive dominion and still wider ascendancy a number of subject provinces, client kingdoms, protected allies, races and tribes, by a system of conquest and an administrative

organisation that anticipated in many salient features our methods of governing India. But the Roman dominions were compact and well knit together by communications. The Romans were masters of the whole Mediterranean littoral, and their capital, whether at Rome or Constantinople, held a central and commanding position. Then at the present time we see Russia holding down Northern Europe with one foot, and Central Asia with the other. She is the first power that has succeeded so completely in throwing down the barriers which have hitherto divided the East from the West, as to found a colossal dominion in the heart of both continents. But with the Roman, Russian, and all other historical empires the mass of their territory has been annexed by advancing step after step along the land from the central starting point, making one foothold sure before another was taken, firmly placing one arch of the viaduct before another was thrown out, allowing no interruption of territorial coherence from the centre to the circumference. This was not so in the case of the Indian empire. During the time when the English were establishing their predominance in India, and long afterwards, England was separated from India by thousands of miles of sea—the Atlantic and Indian Oceans lay between. The government of the English in India presents, I believe, a unique instance of the dominion over an immense alien

¹ A lecture delivered at Oxford.

people in a distant country having been acquired entirely by gradual expansion from a base on the sea.

The predisposing conditions, the currents prevailing in the political latitudes of Europe and Asia, that first opened to England the way to India and set us on to this great enterprise, may be traced down to the sixteenth century. That century is taken by Erskine, in his *History of India under the two first Mogul Emperors*, as the period during which the kingdoms of Europe settled down into their national form, and he says that something of the same kind took place about the same time in Asia. This generalisation can only be accepted, for either continent, in very rough and loose outline. It may be admitted, however, that in Asia the great internal commotions, the swarmings of tribes under such leaders as Jenghis Khan or Tamerlane, the overthrowing of dynasties, and the vast territorial conquests, ceased in the early part of the seventeenth century. For it was then that the Mogul empire was established in India by the brilliant expedition of the Emperor Bâber, that the kingdom of Persia was consolidated under Shah Ismael, and the permanent boundaries of the Ottoman dominions in Asia fixed to some extent by the taking of Egypt. Thus the three great Asiatic States of Turkey, Persia, and India were organised and shaped out at about the same time under powerful dynasties, which to some extent counterbalanced and steadied each other, so that there occurred a stationary period which lasted up to the eighteenth century. Then confusion broke out again in the heart of Asia: the two ruling dynasties of Persia and India were upset; and by the middle of that century the Mogul Empire of India, shaken to its base by Nadir Shah's invasion in 1738, fell rapidly to pieces.

Now it is also to be observed that at the beginning of the eighteenth century one main current of European enterprise, after some fluctuation, begins to set strongly and decisively East-

ward. And for the last hundred years the really potent element in Asiatic politics, which is likely to transform the whole situation, has been the rapidly growing predominance of European powers.

Of the political changes introduced by this overflow of Europe into Asia, the acquisition of all India and Burmah by the English has hitherto been incomparably the greatest; although the steady advance of Russia, pushing forward her steel wedges into the central regions, is fraught with no less momentous import to the destinies of the Continent. But while Russia has been laboriously following the well-known and well-worn routes of conquest by land through the central steppes of Asia, the English have reached South Asia swiftly and securely by the open water-ways. And thus it has come to pass that, whereas all previous conquests of India have been made from the northern mountains to the sea, the English have acquired their dominion by an expansion from the sea to the northern mountains. I need hardly observe that this very remarkable exploit could only have been performed by virtue of great naval strength and superiority.

We all know what first took the English to India. Their object was to secure a share in the Indian trade with Europe, which has been from the days of the Roman Empire the largest, the most precious, the most profitable channel of Asiatic commerce. So long as that trade followed its ancient routes by the Red Sea, or by the Persian Gulf, or across Central Asia, the Western nations could have little or nothing to do with it. But the Turks broke or damaged those lines of communication; and the circumnavigation of Africa at the end of the fifteenth century opened a new thoroughfare by sea. These two events turned the whole course and direction of Asiatic trade: the merchant cities of the Mediterranean lost their advantages of position; and the competition for the commerce of India began among the ocean-going nations of the Atlantic

seaboard. This commercial rivalry developed into an armed contest for political ascendancy in Southern India, and laid the foundations of the English dominion. Now the French believe, and have often said, that if England had not got the better of them in the beginning of this contest India would have belonged to France, that they, in fact, would have been where we are now. That such an exploit as the conquest of India should have been possible to either nation is surely a very extraordinary fact, hardly less remarkable than its accomplishment by one of them. How was it that the richest and most populous country of Southern Asia, a land of ancient renown and high intellectual civilisation, lay just then unclaimed and masterless, a prize to be disputed for among foreign adventurers; that it became for a short time the battle-field of two far distant European nations? The immediate causes are to be found in the actual political conditions of India in the eighteenth century. But to these must be added certain permanent features and immemorial characteristics of the country; its physical geography, its political institutions, and the composition of its people.

The first thing that strikes most of us on looking back over the history of our acquisition of India, is the magnitude of the exploit; the second is the ease with which it was effected. At the present moment, when the English survey from their small island in the West the immense Eastern empire that has grown up out of their petty trading settlements on the Indian seaboard, they are apt to be struck with wonder and a kind of dismay at the prospering of their own handiwork. The thing is, as I have said, so unprecedented in history, and particularly it is so entirely unfamiliar to modern political ideas; we have become so unaccustomed in the Western world to build up empires in the high Roman fashion, that even those who have studied the beginnings of our Indian dominion are inclined to treat the outcome and

climax as something that passes man's understanding. Our magnificent possessions are commonly regarded as a man might look at a great prize he had drawn by luck in a lottery,—they are supposed to have been won by incalculable chance. Mr. Seeley, for instance, in that very instructive dissertation on our Indian Empire which occupies two chapters of his book on the Expansion of England, lends himself to this popular belief. "Our acquisition of India," he says, "was made blindly. Nothing great that has ever been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally or accidentally as the conquest of India." And again: "The conquest of India is very wonderful in the sense that nothing similar to it had ever happened before, and that therefore nothing similar could be expected by those who for the first century and a half administered the affairs of the Company in India." I take this opportunity of stating my opinion that Mr. Seeley's view, which embodies the general impression on this subject, can be controverted by known facts. The idea that India might be easily conquered and governed, with a very small force, by a race superior in warlike capacity or in civilisation, was no novelty at all. In the first place the thing had actually been done once already. The Emperor Bâber, who invaded India from Central Asia in the sixteenth century, has left us his authentic memoirs; it is a book of great historical interest, and nothing more amusing has ever been written by an Asiatic. He says: "When I invaded the country for the fifth time, overthrew Sultan Ibrahim, and subdued the empire of Hindostan, my servants, the merchants and their servants [he means the Commissariat], and the followers of all friends that were in camp along with me, were numbered, and they amounted to 12,000 men. I placed my foot," he writes, "in the stirrup of resolution, and my hands on the reins of confidence in God—and I marched against the possessions of the throne of Delhi

and the dominions of Hindostan, whose army was said to amount to 100,000 foot, with more than 1,000 elephants. The Most High God," he adds, "did not suffer the hardships that I had undergone to be thrown away, but defeated my formidable enemy and made me conqueror of this noble country."

This was done in 1526; Bâber's victory at Paniput gave him the mastery of all Northern India, and founded the Mogul Empire. He had really accomplished the enterprise with smaller means and resources than those possessed by the English when they had fixed themselves securely in Bengal with a base on the sea; and the great host which he routed at Paniput was a far more formidable army than the English ever encountered in India until they met the Sikhs. Now, what had been done before could be done again, and was indeed likely to be done again. So when at the opening of the eighteenth century the Mogul Empire was evidently declining towards a fall, and people were speculating upon what might come after it, we find floating in the minds of cool observers the idea that the next conquest of India might possibly be made by Europeans. The key-note had indeed been struck earlier by Bernier, who was a French physician at the court of Aurungzebe towards the close of the seventeenth century, and who writes in his book that M. de Condé or M. de Turenne with 20,000 men could conquer all India; and who in his letter to Colbert lays particular stress first on the riches, secondly on the weakness, of Bengal. But in 1746 one Colonel James Mill, who had been twenty years in India, submitted to the Austrian Emperor a scheme for conquering Bengal as a very feasible and profitable undertaking. "The whole country of Hindostan," he says, "or empire of the Great Mogul, is, and ever has been, in a state so feeble and defenceless that it is almost a miracle that no prince of Europe, with a maritime power at command, has not as yet

thought of making such acquisitions there, as at one stroke would put him and his subjects in possession of infinite wealth. . . . The policy of the Mogul is bad, his military worse, and as to a maritime power to command and protect his coasts, he has none at all. . . . The province of Bengal is at present under the dominion of a rebel subject of the Mogul, whose annual revenue amounts to about two millions. But Bengal, though not to be reduced by the power of the Mogul, is equally indefensible with the rest of Hindostan on the side of the ocean, and consequently may be forced out of the rebel's hand with all its wealth, which is incredibly vast." If we bear in mind how little could have been accurately known of India as a whole by an Englishman in 1746, we must give Colonel Mill credit for much sagacity and insight into the essential facts of the situation. He discerns the central points; he places his finger upon the elementary causes of India's permanent weakness, her political instability within, and her sea-coast exposed and undefended externally.

And now let me read you the words with which Alexander Dow, writing in 1764, when men began to see a little further ahead, closed his *History of Hindostan*. This is what he says: "Thus we have in a few words endeavoured to give a general idea of the present state of Hindostan. . . . It is apparent from what has been said that the immense regions of Hindostan might be well reduced by a handful of regular troops. Ten thousand European infantry, together with the Sepoys in the country's service, are not only sufficient to conquer all India, but, with proper policy, to maintain it for ages as an appendage of the British Crown. This position may at first sight appear a paradox to people unacquainted with the genius and disposition of the inhabitants of Hindostan; but to those who have considered both with attention the thing seems not only practicable but easy." And so indeed it turned out to be; for old Dow's political speculations have been literally and exactly verified by

the result. To give one more prophecy,—in 1765 Lord Clive foresaw, and plainly warned the East India Company in a letter that has been often quoted, that they were already on the straight road to universal dominion.

What was the situation which, surveyed coolly and steadily by these experienced observers, led them to declare that all India lay at the mercy of a small but well-disciplined and ably led army of invaders? They saw the whole country from the Indus to the Ganges, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, in utter disorganisation; for the Mogul emperors had broken up all the minor kingdoms and petty principalities within their reach, had sedulously endeavoured to monopolise in their own hands all authority, and to leave nothing standing except their own despotism. They had thus constructed a huge centralised top-heavy administration, carried on mostly by foreigners or men of foreign extraction, and supported by a great mercenary army. Long wars, dynastic contests, great military establishments, organised marauding and misgovernment, had trampled down and pulverised almost all the indigenous political institutions of India.

It was after the death, in 1707, of the Emperor Aurungzebe that this empire began to fall away under violent dislocation. His reign coincided generally in point of time with the era of Louis XIV. of France; and it may be said of these grand monarchs that their policy, at home and abroad, was of the same complexion. It was a system that in both instances contributed largely towards the dissolution of the kingdom and the eventual fall of the dynasty. Ambitious projects of territorial aggrandisement, unjust wars and oppression of weaker neighbours, characterised the foreign policies of both Aurungzebe and of Louis XIV. Blind persecution of unbelievers or heretics, and grasping centralisation of personal authority, prevailed in their internal governments. Just as we read in St. Simon how bigots and

lackeys and panders had undone the fortunes of France, so we know from Bernier and others how religious intolerance, the destruction of all local independence, the distribution of all high offices among incapable courtiers and grasping military adventurers, were ruining the Mogul Empire. The dominion which had sprung up out of the vigour and audacity of Bâber and his free-lances from the Oxus was now in the last stage of emaculate decay. The chronic invasions of India from the North West, which had ceased during the flourishing period of the Moguls when they held Cabul and Candahar as their frontier outposts, now began again. Nadir Shah made his irruption in 1738, sacked Delhi, and rent away from the skirts of the empire all the Mogul provinces west of the Indus, including Eastern Afghanistan. The barriers having been thus broken down, Ahmed Shah the Abdallee followed ten years later, and seized all the Punjab in 1748: the Mahrattas from the South West spread over Central India like a devastating flood; and the whole land, having been levelled flat by the steam-roller of absolutism, was now easily broken up into anarchy. All the different provinces and vice-royalties went their own way; they were parcelled out in a scuffle among revolted governors, rival chiefs, leaders of insurgent tribes or sects, religious revivalists, and captains of roving bands. The Indian people were an immense mixed multitude swaying to and fro, and clinging to any power, natural or supernatural, that seemed likely to protect them. They were prepared to acquiesce in the assumption of authority by any one who could show himself able to discharge the most elementary functions of government. In short the people were scattered and without a leader, while the whole country was in the lowest stage of political exhaustion.

It was just at this epoch that the French and English appeared on the Asiatic stage, having distanced or disposed of earlier European rivals. The

Portuguese had come first, by virtue of priority of discovery. The Dutch had followed, and wrested from the Portuguese much of their trade and settlements; but toward the end of the seventeenth century they had become entangled in long and ruinous wars with France, who was good enough to break the strength of Holland, and thus to relieve England of her most active maritime rival. In this manner it came to pass that, after the great settlement of Europe which was accomplished at the Peace of Utrecht, France and England alone faced each other as serious competitors for the prize of Indian commerce. Although the French had been much enfeebled by the disastrous dynastic wars of Louis XIV. which ended in 1713, in the peaceful interval of the next thirty years their resources and their enterprising spirit revived; so that towards the middle of the eighteenth century the commercial and colonial rivalry between the two foremost maritime nations may be said to have reached its climax. The colonial quarrel was fought, as we all know, in North America; the field on which the two nations met to contend for what was, at that time, the most valuable sea-borne trade in the world, was India.

This contest began early in the eighteenth century, after the Peace of Utrecht. Each nation was represented by a wealthy and energetic East India Company, both of which retained for some time their original trading character, founded settlements and factories, and took little concern in the internal affairs of the country. But it was quite certain that when the French and English had thus fixed themselves side by side on the Indian seaboard they would speedily fall into collision. The eighteenth century was, you remember, an age of chronic war between the two States, of war that was indeed intermittent, like a violent fever, but that broke out regularly and with increasing heat after each interval. The rupture between France and England in 1744 was the signal

for the beginning of formal hostilities between the Companies; and thus within a very few years commercial rivalry had been transformed into an armed contest for political ascendancy in the Indian peninsula. In this struggle the English first developed their power.

It seems to me, therefore, that the rise and territorial expansion of our dominion may be conveniently divided into two periods, which slightly overlap each other, but on the whole mark two successive positions on the line of advance. The first of these I call the period of contest between Europeans for ascendancy in India,—from 1744 to 1763. The second is the period of contest between England and other native Indian powers for the dominion of India,—from 1757 to 1805.

To begin with the first period. As soon as war broke out in Europe in 1744 each nation for the first time backed its Company with troops and war-ships; and both Companies began to form connexions with the neighbouring Indian princes, and to take sides with them in their scuffles over the spoiling of the prostrate Mogul Empire. The conflict between French and English went on for twenty years uninterruptedly; for although England and France were at peace from 1748 to 1756 (between the Peace of Aix la Chapelle and the Seven Years' War), this interval was utilised by diligent unofficial fighting between the two Companies in India. You are probably aware that up to the middle of the eighteenth century international usages permitted very active hostilities to go on in remote countries, or upon distant waters, without any formal rupture between the States whose subjects were dealing each other heavy blows. So long as it was not convenient to take diplomatic cognisance of such dissensions, they might be treated as local irregularities. The institution of chartered Companies gave a kind of half-legality to the armed expeditions that went out, on their own venture, to occupy fresh lands or new points of commercial ad-

vantage. That such Companies should be able to fight their own way and hold their ground by main force was a necessary condition of their existence; they had not only to beat off marauders and make themselves respected by barbarous potentates, but they had also to deal with their European rivals in the same business. In the regular war that ended in 1748 the luck had gone against us in India, because the French leaders by sea and land — Labourdonnais, Dupleix, and Bussy — were abler men than the English chiefs. But with the peace between the two Governments began the contest between the two Companies; for the general outcome of the war had been to increase the reputation of the French in India, and Dupleix had kept up his disciplined troops. His object was to establish a French dominion in Southern India; and his method was to support one of the parties in a great civil war for the sovereignty of the Deccan; but he saw that the first and most indispensable step was to drive out the English. The English then, perceiving that their own existence was at stake, took the opposite side in the Deccan war; and they proved themselves in the long run so much better players than Dupleix at the game which he had begun, that after many vacillations of fortune the French candidates for rulership in the Deccan were finally worsted, and the French troops were very roughly handled by Clive and Lawrence. The French East India Company found all their funds squandered in much unprofitable fighting, while the French Ministry saw that the grand project of French domination had collapsed; so they recalled Dupleix, who died in France overwhelmed by debt and disappointment.

It is natural enough that the French should be disposed to make a hero, almost a martyr, of Dupleix; and to assert, as Xavier Raymond has done, that England in conquering India has had but to follow the path which the genius of France opened to her. The struggle in India was only a brief

episode of the great and arduous contest for transmarine dominion which was fought out between France and England in the eighteenth century; and in that episode Dupleix is the foremost figure. But yet I doubt much whether he ever had the means or the ability to influence materially the destinies of his nation. He was a man of intrepid and imperious disposition, who held openly that the French temperament was better suited for conquest than for commerce, and who accordingly embarked upon large and hazardous schemes of political aggrandisement. He failed, in my opinion, as much from want of skill as from want of strength. He made the common mistake of affecting ostentatious display and employing unscrupulous intrigue in his dealings with the Indians; whereas a European should meet Orientals not with their weapons, but with his own. Mill, in his summary explanation of the conquest of India by the English, says that the two important discoveries for conquering India were, firstly, the weakness of the native armies against European discipline; secondly, the facility of imparting that discipline to natives in the European service. He adds, "Both these discoveries were made by the French," and almost all writers on Indian history have repeated this after him. But first the weakness of the Indian armies, especially in the South, had long been known; they were weak, not only against Europeans, but also against the bands of Central Asia. And secondly there was really nothing new in the French plan of drilling two or three native regiments to serve as a contingent in the Deccan war. The Mogul armies had always contained a certain number of European officers, while within a very few years after the time of Dupleix the Mahratta leaders had trained battalions. So soon as the European companies began to engage in the Indian wars, the system of giving discipline to the native mercenary, who swarmed in all the camps, was too obvious and

too necessary to be ranked as a discovery.

It seems to me, therefore, that Dupleix invented nothing, except a new departure in politics; he tried to substitute conquest for commerce, wherein he not only failed, but threw the game into English hands. I will go further, and express my doubt whether even his success could have materially and permanently changed the fortunes of France in India. For, in the first place, it is clear that the dominion in India of a maritime European nation must always depend upon the command of the sea, an advantage that the French had clearly lost. And secondly, the key that unlocks the gate of empire in India is to be found not in the far South, where the French had planted themselves, but in the North. It is this latter point which I desire to press upon your attention,—the point that, although all our fighting with the French was in the angle of the Indian peninsula, on the Coromandel Coast, yet the true foundations of our dominion were laid not there, but upon our acquisition of the province of Bengal. It was at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, in 1757, that Clive seized the French and Dutch settlements on the Hoogly river, defeated the Nawab of Bengal, and within a few years placed in the possession of the East India Company not only Bengal proper, but also the rich and extensive provinces of Behar and Orissa. This was the territorial conquest which really fixed us upon Indian soil, placed us in so strong a position, and supplied us with such ample resources that we could never afterwards be dislodged. It enabled us to defend, as from a point of vantage, all our possessions on the eastern and western coasts, in Madras and Bombay, which could not have held out by their own strength. And, above all, it formed the base of our continuous advance into the interior of India.

It is therefore my opinion that the destinies of all India were determined by the taking of Bengal, in connection, be it always recollected, with our

superiority on the Indian seas. Some writers have attributed vital importance to the desultory skirmishes and small though sharp battles between the French and the English in Southern India. They appear to believe that if Bussy had beaten Lawrence in one encounter, or if Coote had not been too much for Lally in another, the course of Indian history might have been changed. Such views are, to my mind, erroneous. They betray some disregard of historic proportion; and they proceed upon the narrow theory that extensive political changes may hang on the event of a small battle, or on the behaviour at some critical moment of a general of division. I do not believe that the issue of the contest between France and England for the gates of India hung upon any such nice balance of accident or opportunity. It was the defeat of the French by sea and land during the Seven Years' War, the disorder of their finances, and the rise of our naval superiority, that cut the roots of the French power in India, where it had never been planted very deep. And the main reason why the Frenchman was fairly overthrown in the last grapple on the Indian coast is that the English had their feet firmly planted in Bengal.

Here ends therefore my first period, for we are now on the threshold of my second period—from 1761 to 1803—when the contest for dominion in India lay between England and other native Indian competitors. And certainly it was from Bengal, not from the southern or western coasts of India, that the English set out on the road that led to universal supremacy in India.

Now it must be understood that Bengal is, in more senses than one, the soft side of India. From Cape Comorin northward along the east coast there is not a single harbour for large ships; nor are the river estuaries accessible to them. But at the head of the Bay we come upon a deltaic low-lying region pierced by the navigable channels which discharge through several mouths the

waters of great rivers issuing from the interior. Some of these are merely huge drains of the water-logged soil ; others are fed by the Himalayan snows. On this section, and upon no other of the Indian sea-board, the rivers are wide waterways offering fair harbourage and the means of penetrating many miles inland ; while around and beyond stretches the rich alluvial plain of Bengal, inhabited by a very industrious and unwarlike people, who produce much and can live on very little. In the eighteenth century the richest province of all India, in agriculture and manufactures, was Bengal. As to this all authorities agree. Colonel James Mill, in his already quoted work, points out that it has vast wealth and is indefensible towards the sea. "The immense commerce of Bengal," says Verelst in 1767, "might be considered as the central point to which all the riches of India were attracted. Its manufactures find their way to the remotest parts of Hindostan." It lay out of the regular track of invasion from Central Asia, and remote from the arena of civil wars which surged round the capital cities, Agra, Delhi, or Lahore. For ages it had been ruled by foreigners from the North ; yet it was the province most exposed to maritime attack, and the most valuable in every respect to a seafaring and commercial race like the English. Its rivers lead like main arteries up to the heart of India. From Bengal north-westward the land lies open, and, with a few interruptions, almost flat, expanding into the great central plain country that we call the North West Provinces and Oude, and further northward into the Punjaub up to the foot of the Himalayan wall. Whoever holds that immense interior champaign country, which spreads from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, occupies the central position that dominates all the rest of India. And you will observe that all the great capital cities founded by successive conquering dynasties have been within this region.

If now you look at the map of India, you will perceive that Upper or

Continental (as distinguished from Peninsular) India has been divided off from the rest of Asia by walls of singular strength and height. The whole of the Indian land frontier is fenced and fortified by mountain ranges ; and where, in the south-west towards the sea, the mountains subside and have an easier slope, the Indian desert is interposed between the frontier and the fertile midland region. It is as if Nature, knowing the richness of the treasure, had taken the greatest possible pains to protect it ; for along the whole of that vast line of mountain wall which overhangs the north-west and the northern boundaries of India there are only a very few practicable passes. These are the outlets through Afghanistan, by which all invaders, from Alexander the Great downward, have descended upon the low country ; and any one who, after traversing the interminable hills and strong valleys of Afghanistan, has seen, on mounting the last ridge, the vast plain of India spreading out before him in dusky haze like a sea, may imagine the feelings with which it was surveyed by one of these adventurous leaders from the Asiatic highlands. Along the whole northern line of frontier the Himalayas are practically impassable ; for the chain of towering mountains is backed by a lofty tableland, rising at its highest to about 17,000 feet, which projects northward into Central Asia like the immense glacis of a fortress.

Such are the natural fortifications of India landward. But an invader landing on the sea-board takes all these defences in reverse. He enters, as I have said, by open ill-guarded water-gates ; he can penetrate into the centre of the fortress, can march up inside to the foot of the walls, can occupy the posts, and turn the fortifications against others. This is just what the English have accomplished in the course of the second of my two periods,—the period of wars with the native powers in India. Our occupation of Bengal, at the beginning of that period into which we now enter,

transferred to that province from Southern India the true centre of government; and thus we emerge rapidly into a far wider arena of war and politics. In 1765 the Company accepted the high office of Dewan or Imperial Commissioners for the control of the revenue and the finances; and when they had thus assumed charge of the treasury and of the army the Company were soon compelled to stand forth plainly as the country's ruler.

The English now found themselves face to face with the native chiefs and princes, none of whom had a better title or a longer tenure than our own; while in skill, strength, and capacity they were decidedly inferior. In fact the serious fighting powers with whom we had at this epoch to deal were only two,—the Mahratta Confederacy in the centre of India, and Hyder Ali at Mysore far down in the Indian peninsula. Hyder Ali was formidable because he occupied a position whence he could at any time descend upon Madras; and in fact he might have easily overpowered our settlements on the south-eastern coast if they had not been assisted from Bengal. The Mahrattas had set up a great military power in Central India whence they could strike at all three Presidencies, at Bengal, Bombay, and Madras, which were cut off from each other by distance and by difficulty of communication. From the year 1765, when we assumed the government of Bengal, up to 1805,—that is up to the end of my second period,—our wars were almost entirely against these two antagonists; and by the end of that period we had completely destroyed Mysore, and had effectively disabled the Mahrattas.

Now it is a remarkable fact, to which I desire to draw your attention, that although beyond the north-west frontier of Bengal lies the country of the more warlike Indian races, who gave us much trouble later, yet by special good fortune we had no serious contests in that quarter during the period of which I am now treating. The explanation is to be found in the

confused and dislocated political condition of Northern India during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Afghans had broken in across the Indus from beyond the mountains, and had overcome the whole country down to Delhi; if they had not been able to hold it themselves, they had upset all other governments. The Mahrattas had marched up from the South with a great marauding army. Then the Mahomedan princes and chiefs of the North rallied under the Afghan leader, Ahmed Shah the Abdallee, to repel the Hindoo Mahrattas, and there was a tremendous collision on the field of Paniput just above Delhi. This was probably the greatest pitched battle ever fought in India, and the Mahrattas were totally defeated. Now this victory was greatly to the advantage of the English, and to no one else. The Mahrattas had sustained a knock-down blow which weakened them for many a year; and the Afghans did not follow up their success, but on the contrary retired. Ahmed Shah the Afghan was a great captain, belonging to the type of men who conquer kingdoms for themselves in Asia. If he had used his victory to seize the vacant throne at Delhi he might have founded a strong warlike dynasty in Upper India which would probably have held the English in check for another half century, and would have endangered our position in Bengal. He would have been able to draw fresh supplies of fighting men continually from the hardy tribes beyond the Indus, just as all the Mahomedan emperors of India had done for centuries before him, and just as the English now stiffen their Indian fighting line with British soldiers. But Ahmed Shah had his own troubles at home; so he went back to his hills, where he founded that kingdom of Afghanistan which still exists, being upheld by the English as a barrier against Northern invaders of a much more serious kind than Afghans. When he returned, in 1767, the road was no longer clear; for by that time the Sikhs had banded themselves together in the centre of

the Punjaub; they lay right across his path, and resisted him with all the obstinacy of valiant fanatics.

The Sikhs, being a native Indian power fiercely opposed to the Mahomedans, entirely checked the inroads of the Central Asian tribes, drove back the Afghans across the Indus, and sealed up the north-western gates of India for fifty years; until at last we relieved guard by adding the Punjaub to our Indian Empire in 1849. But the Sikhs were not an organised power until the end of the eighteenth century; and in the meantime the whole of that splendid and fertile region which extends from Bengal north-west to the Himalayas and the Indus, lay masterless, scrambled for and parcelled out among rival adventurers, who could take but could not keep. It was clearly a prize that had been and might be again easily won by superior enterprise, vigour, and ability in government. But it was very doubtful indeed whether any of the native usurpers or adventurers who were settling down among the ruins of Bâber's empire were capable of rebuilding it. For seven hundred years, at least, no great and durable government had ever been established in Northern India on any other basis than foreign conquest; nor had any such dominion existed that had not drawn the *élite* of its army from beyond the Indian borders. The advent of a new foreign dominion might therefore be safely predicted. But the growing strength of the Sikhs, and to some degree the establishment of the Afghan kingdom, were throwing barriers across the only line of invasion by land; while the command of the sea was in our hands, and all other maritime nations had withdrawn from competition with us. By this determination and concurrence of events the prize was reserved, as one might say, for the English. And so you will observe that immediately after one foreign empire (the Mogul) had been fairly uprooted, another (the British) began to form and develop as if by a natural process of necessary reproduction.

This, therefore, is my explanation of the facility with which, during my second period, the English rose to supremacy in India. The causes were threefold. They had no foreign competitors; the whole country was in confusion; and they held Bengal, the richest province of the Empire, which gave them at once a base and an open line of advance. Yet from 1765 to the end of the century our territorial extension went on very slowly, and the reason of this is to be found in the condition of European politics, which reacted powerfully in India. From 1773 to 1784 was a very troublous time for the English all over the world. It is the misfortune of a peace-loving commercial people that goes pushing its fortunes into the uttermost parts of the earth, to have a good many scores running up against them wherever they go; and you know that it is this kind of score, and this only, which debtors are always anxious to settle on the first opportunity. Well, at this moment the French had a very heavy account against us, so had the Spanish, so had the Dutch, and so had Hyder Ali of Mysore. The revolt of the American colonies gave them all their opportunity; and most handsomely did they pay us off, especially in India, where Hyder Ali defeated our troops, ravaged our country, and very nearly took Madras.

This was in 1780, and the date fixes the lowest watermark of the tide of English fortunes during the struggle with the native Powers. We were enabled to hold our own in India, and to weather the storm, by two things. The first was that we had undisturbed possession of Bengal, for that province was never attacked. The second was that we had in Warren Hastings a Governor-General of first-rate capacity and courage; a man determined to stand fast at all hazards, who kept his head and carried high his country's flag throughout the tempest. His departure in 1783 may be said to close the term of the East India Company's independent rulership. From that time India came, by Pitt's celebrated

India Bill, under direct Parliamentary control. It is remarkable, however, that the immediate consequence of this great change was to stimulate, not to retard, the expansion of our territorial possessions. Mr. Spencer Walpole in his *History of Europe* has declared that every prominent statesman of the time disliked and forbade further additions to the Company's territories; and in 1781 an Act had certainly been passed forbidding Governors-General to make wars, or treaties leading to war, without sanction from home. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the era of extensive war and conquest began when the Crown superseded the Company in the supreme direction of affairs. The period of twenty years, from 1786 to 1805, when British India was ruled by the two first Parliamentary Governors-General, Cornwallis and Wellesley—by Governors-General that is, who were appointed by Ministers responsible to Parliament and for party reasons—that period was also the epoch of the beginning of Indian wars on a large scale, and of our widest annexations; the greatest development of our territory coincides precisely with their tenure of office. If the foundations of the Indian Empire were laid by merchants, the lofty superstructure was raised by the Parliamentary pro-consuls and generals.

Of the new dynasty of Governors-General the first, as I have said, was Cornwallis, who took office in 1786. Invested with supreme civil and military authority in India, steadily supported at home by a triumphant Ministry, his work, his reputation, his close connection with Pitt and Dundas, all contrived to sweep away the obstacles that blocked the path of Hastings, and for the first time to clothe the representative of England in India with the attribute of genuine rulership. In the exercise of these ample powers he was materially aided by the political situation in Europe and Asia. The unfortunate wars of Lord North's day had ceased; they had been succeeded in Europe by

a period of peace; it was the interval of uneasy calm before the explosion of the revolutionary cyclone. This breathing time gave Cornwallis leisure to carry out some large internal reforms, and an opportunity for a stroke at Tippoo at Mysore, whom he left maimed and savagely vindictive. Then, in 1793, began our great war with Revolutionary France, which soon affected the temper of English politics in India. All Lord Cornwallis's projects of peaceful alliance with the native States, of non-intervention, and of a balance among the leading Indian Powers, were upset in our furious struggle with Bonaparte, who sought Asiatic alliances, and who openly threatened India. Lord Morington (afterwards Wellesley) came out imbued with the proud and warlike spirit which then ruled the councils of the English nation. He lost no time in discovering that French influence in the armies and cabinets of our Indian rivals was increasing to an alarming degree. Tippoo of Mysore had sent in 1797 a formal embassy to the French in the Mauritius, proposing an offensive and defensive alliance against the English, which of course the French accepted eagerly. Then in 1798 Bonaparte, having taken Egypt, addressed a letter to Tippoo, dated "Head Quarters, Cairo," saying, "You have been already informed of my arrival on the borders of the Red Sea, with an innumerable and invincible army, full of the desire of releasing you from the iron yoke of England," and asking for an agent to be sent to him. The Mahrattas and the Hyderabad States had in their pay disciplined brigades commanded by French officers. Such were the sparks that blown across to Asia from the fiery wars of Europe rapidly kindled a conflagration in India. The result was that within five years the two Wellesleys, *duo fulmina belli*, crushed out Tippoo altogether, disabled the Mahrattas, disarmed the Nizam, annexed half Oude, pensioned off the Great Mogul, and finally established the unchallenged predominance

of England in India. That he was allowed to give such scope to his ambitious and bellicose propensities must be attributed very greatly to the spirit of the time; for we have to remember that from 1793 to 1805 was an era of tumultuous confusion, of breaking up of kingdoms, and of unscrupulous violent annexations all over the civilised world. Lord Wellesley's declared object was, in his own words, "the complete consolidation of the British Empire in India, and the future tranquillity of Hindostan." Nor, whatever we may think of the methods occasionally used by him to attain these ends, can we withhold our admiration from a conception so large, from so clear and far-ranging a survey of the political horizon. At the end of his Governor-Generalship the English frontier had advanced from the Bay of Bengal up to the skirts of the Himalayan mountains. And so ends my second period; for although the English had still before them two or three fierce battles with the Sikh army, they had no longer any serious rivals for ascendancy in India; and by 1865 their predominant power had been firmly consolidated.

After this manner, therefore, and with the full consent of the English nation as expressed through its Parliament, did successive Governors-General pushed on by forced marches to universal dominion in India, fulfilling Lord Clive's prophecy and disdaining the sober ways of the old Trading Company. Let us now, before conclusion, overleap some thirty-five years of the present century, and see what is in 1838 our position in India in the opening years of Her Majesty's splendid and memorable reign. The names of our old allies and enemies, of Oude, Mysore, the Mahratta princes, the Nizam and others, are still writ large on the map of India; but they have fallen into the rear of our onward march, while in front of us is only Runjeet Singh ruling all the Punjab up to the Afghan hills. The curtain is just rising upon the first act of the

great drama of Central Asian politics; Lord Auckland is sending troops for the first time across the Indian frontiers into Afghanistan. What does this indicate? Not that we have any quarrel with the Afghans, but that after half a century's respite we are beginning to feel again the influence of European rivalry in Asia; and that, whereas in the last century we had only to fear that rivalry on the Indian sea-coast, we have now to turn our eye in the opposite direction, towards the Oxus and the Paropamisus mountains. Another half century passes; and in 1891 Her Majesty surveys all India united under her sovereignty, whether directly administered, or through allied and friendly princes. The whole of Burmah has been added to India; Beluchistan has come under our protectorate, and our railways run up to the Afghan marches within seventy miles of Candahar. Our political frontiers now touch on the north-west the limits of Russian protectorates, and on the south-east run into the Chinese provinces and the outlying tracts claimed by the French beyond Siam. What is the consequence of this approximation of the European powers in Asia? The isolation of India from European politics, which has lasted about a hundred years, is about to cease; she is rapidly coming again within the recognised sphere of European diplomacy; the enlargement of her borders is becoming a matter of European concern; her external policy and her military establishments are now to be regulated upon European, much more than upon Asiatic considerations. Instead of the jealousies of trading Companies, and desultory wars between scattered settlements and petty fortresses, we have the greatest military powers of Europe—England, Russia, and France—slowly feeling their way towards each other across wide deserts, difficult mountain ranges, and the debateable lands that skirt the Oxus on the north or the Cambodia river on the far south-east.

A few words before I close. The position of England in India has been

brought about, as I have tried very imperfectly to explain, by the natural propulsion—I might almost say the compulsion—of events; by a combination of determining causes in Europe as well as in Asia. But it is none the less extraordinary and unprecedented in history; and people still ask whether good or ill will come of it. It is a remark of Sir James Mackintosh that in the lifetime of a single generation the English lost one empire and gained another. He meant that we lost North America in 1783, and had won our Indian dominion by 1805; and he added that it is still uncertain whether we lost anything by parting with our American colonies, or gained anything by taking India. Mr. Spencer Walpole, a much later authority upon the history of England, inclines toward the view that in the end nothing will have been gained. "Centuries hence," he writes, "some philosophic historian . . . will relate the history of the British in India as a romantic episode which has had no appreciable effect upon the progress of the human family." Upon this I must remark that whatever may be the eventual advantage to England from her possession of India (of the immediate advantage there can be little doubt) it seems to me already plain that the effect upon the general progress of the human family must be very great. That one of the foremost nations of Western Europe,—foremost as harbinger of light and liberty—should have established a vast empire in Asia, is an accomplished fact which must necessarily give an enormous impulse and a totally new direction to the civilisation of that continent. You will remember that since the Roman Empire began to decline civilisation has not been spreading eastward; on the contrary, in Asia it has distinctly receded; it was driven out and fundamentally uprooted by the Mahomedans; the long dominion of Rome in

Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor has left very little beyond names and ruins. The exceeding slowness with which civilisation spreads over uncivilised races and its liability to crushing reverses illustrate the strength of resistance possessed by barbarism entrenched behind the unchanging conditions of Asiatic existence. But if civilisation barely goes forward in Asia, it is at least not likely again to go back. The forces which broke up in earlier times the higher political organisations, which thrust back the higher religion, no longer exist; neither the fighting power of Asia, nor her fanatic enthusiasm, is now in the least formidable to Europe. Not only is it certain that Asia lies at the mercy of the military strength of Europe, but in all the departments of thought and action she is far inferior. In these circumstances European civilisation is never likely to suffer a great repulse at the hands of Oriental reaction; and European dominion, once firmly planted in Asia, is not likely to be shaken unless it is supplanted by a stronger European rival. Henceforward the struggle will be, not between East and West, but between the great commercial and conquering nations of the West for predominance in Asia. In this contest I believe the English will hold their ground; and in the meantime their dominion in India is an immeasurable and almost too rapid an advance toward the civilisation of Asia. They have undertaken the intellectual emancipation of the Indian people; they are changing the habits of thought, the religious ideas, the moral level of the country. And whatever may be the destiny of our Indian Empire, we shall have conferred upon the Indians great and permanent benefits, and shall have left a good name for ourselves in history.

ALFRED LYALL.

A PRINCE OF DEMOCRACY.

At every stage of human development there have stood forth conspicuously from time to time certain representative men, in whom has been concentrated some leading tendency of thought, whether in politics, literature, art, philosophy, or religion. Thus Socrates typifies the new impulse which was given to speculation in the fifth century before Christ, turning the eyes of philosophers earthwards, after they had lost themselves so long in the contemplation of the stars. Thus in Alexander culminated that eastward direction of Greek energy which, beginning in mythical times with Agamemnon, and awakening for a brief interval after the repulse of Xerxes, sprang into new life under Agesilaus and the younger Cyrus, and, reaching its zenith in the son of Philip, burst like a torrent over Asia. And thus, to come to modern times, in the life of Milton we see drawn into one compass all that is most characteristic of Puritanism—its stern clinging to ideals, its fierce bigotry, its grotesque lack of humour. Nothing is more likely to save us from losing ourselves in the mazes of history than a constant study of such typical lives. For names such as those we have mentioned stand out like beacons in the annals of human progress, illumining large tracts of thought.

Guided by this principle, an enterprising firm of American publishers has recently been issuing a series under the title of *Heroes of the Nations*, each volume of which is devoted to a biographical study "of the life and work of some representative historical character about whom have gathered the great traditions of the nation to which he belonged, and who has been accepted as a type of the national ideal." The series ranges from Pericles to Prince

Bismarck, each life forming a pier of that ever-lengthening bridge which spans the gulf between past and present. The project is an excellent one, and we heartily wish it the success it deserves.

We have before us a specimen of the series, *Pericles and the Golden Age of Athens*, from the pen of Mr. Evelyn Abbott, the distinguished editor of that remarkable collection of essays which is known to every classical student under the title of *Hellenica*. Mr. Abbott has had an exceedingly difficult task to perform. The period which he has to deal with lies principally between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, and the historian of that epoch is apt to fall into despair at the dearth of authorities. We need hardly say that Mr. Abbott shows great skill in constructing a clear narrative out of the scanty materials at his disposal. But there is a want of colour about the early part of his book which was, in the circumstances, inevitable. It is not until he reaches the strong and broad current of Thucydides that his book attains a high point of interest. The last three chapters are devoted to a sketch of Athenian manners and institutions, and a review of the achievements of Athens in literature and art. This seems to us the most valuable part of the book, which is further enriched by copious illustrations.

Before we proceed to the main subject of this paper we will notice one or two points in the earlier chapters of Mr. Abbott's work which have especially attracted our attention. Among these we gladly note the short but decisive vindication of the last days of Miltiades, which removes the blot that has hitherto rested on the fame of the hero of Marathon. An admirable

feature in this part of the book is the precision with which Mr. Abbott marks the chief moments in the growth of the Athenian power. That power culminated just after the battle of *Ænophyta*. "It was a proud moment for Athens. On land she controlled continental cities from the pass of *Thermopylæ* to the *Isthmus*. *Phocis* and *Megara* were willing allies; *Bœotia* and *Locris* were subject to her power. At home the Long Walls secured her from attack. In the *Peloponnesus* *Argos* was her ally; she had planted a foot in the north-east coast of *Argolis*, and was on friendly terms with *Achaia*. Near the mouth of the *Corinthian Gulf* she held *Naupactus*. On sea she was without a rival. The *Delian Confederacy*, which was rapidly becoming the Athenian empire, extended from *Byzantium* to *Phaselis*, from *Miletus* to *Eubœa*. *Ægina*, her old rival, was humbled, and Athenian fleets swept the shores of the *Peloponnesus* at pleasure. The Spartans, the only power now capable of opposition, were little better than caged wolves." We may remark also an able estimate of the character and aims of *Cimon*, with whose death, as Mr. Abbott points out, the last link with the past was broken, and the era of the "heroes of *Marathon*" was at an end.

It will not, perhaps, be unwelcome to our readers if we endeavour to present in one view some of the chief points of interest in the career of that great man who personified in himself the highest aspirations of the most gifted people of ancient *Hellas*.

Here, however, we are met at the outset by a difficulty. If we want a description of the personality of *Pericles* we must go to the pages of *Plutarch*; and *Plutarch* belongs to a class of writers whose chief delight lies in that attempt to weave a web of legend and romance around the great characters of the past which is an infallible symptom of literary dotage. Moreover the narrative of *Plutarch* is accessible to all readers in the classical

translation of *Langhorne*; and we should lay ourselves open to the charge of hawking stale literary wares if we drew the materials for our account from that time-honoured chronicle. The history of *Thucydides* only covers the last few years of *Pericles'* life. And, apart from this, the method of *Thucydides* is utterly alien from that picturesqueness of personal detail which other historians have often thought it their main business to aim at. *Thucydides* deals, not with individual Athenians or individual Spartans, but with Athens and Sparta. His sense of historical perspective is too fine to allow any actor, however eminent, to intrude too prominently into the foreground of his canvas. The greatest men of whom he writes come before us stripped of every personal trait, mere shadowy emblems of certain political tendencies. This rigid rejection of individual colouring communicates to the narrative of *Thucydides* an austerity which is one of the main causes of his unpopularity. Nevertheless, it is one of the noblest features in that great writer's work, and leaves him free scope to accomplish, as no other man has ever accomplished, the true aim of history. No man had ever a keener insight into the impulses which sway great masses of men, no writer has a deeper or more thrilling pathos. Those who have had the patience to submit to that intense and devoted application which is necessary to wring from this author the full treasure of his meaning are rewarded by wonderful glimpses of the inner springs of national life. We seem, as we read, to feel the very heart-throbs of a mighty people. Now this triumph of the historical method would have been impossible, had *Thucydides* aimed at that sort of dramatic effect which is the business of the playwright and the novelist. When we stand on the verge of the sea-beach our attention is distracted by the fret and commotion of the single waves which break at our feet; we must move some distance inland, and wait until the sounds of earth are

hushed, if we would catch the collective cadence of the sea. Similar is the effect which is produced on the mind by a careful study of the great Athenian.

If, then, we look to Thucydides for a vivid and characteristic portrait of the great statesman of Athens we shall be disappointed. It was not his business, and therefore he left it to other hands. Unhappily no contemporary of Pericles has supplied that omission; and it is impossible to restrain a feeling of regret that such is the case. How inestimable would have been the service if some contemporary hand had drawn the veil which hides from us the private life of Pericles,—had shown him in familiar converse with Aspasia, planning with Phidias the adornment of the city which he loved, or engaged with Anaxagoras in the pursuit of the mysterious essence which, as that philosopher taught, permeates and informs the brute matter of the universe! What would we not give to sit with Pericles at such another banquet as that which is described by Plato in that wild dialogue which seems to measure the heights and depths of human nature, in which the philosopher now dazzles us with a vision of eternal truth, and now condescends to assume the comic mask, not disdaining the hiccup of Aristophanes or the drunken confidences of Alcibiades! That gap in history must remain for ever unfilled; and we must be content with such stray lights as we can gather from chance allusions in writers who lived near enough to the age of Pericles to preserve some authentic fragments of his life and personality. Such a side glimpse is afforded by a scene in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. We know to what a point of perfection the negative method of Zeno and Parmenides was carried by Socrates, and what a stern touchstone of superficial thought it became in his hands. The brighter spirits of that age delighted in the new weapon of dialectic fence whose use they learnt from the master; and the younger men especially

frequently put it to a petulant and malicious purpose—tearing every thought into tatters, as Plato says, like mischievous puppies at play. This preface was necessary to render intelligible the scene which follows. Pericles, we will suppose, is seated in the privacy of his house, wrapped in the cares of state; to him enters Alcibiades, (who was his ward, and a connexion by blood,) fresh from the stimulating discourse of the incorrigible old man of the market-place.

Alcibiades (innocently). Pericles, could you tell me, please, what is the meaning of law? I want to know, because I just now heard some men praised as law-abiding persons, and I don't see how any one can deserve this praise, unless he knows what law is.

Pericles (smiling). Well, it is a very simple matter you are asking about, Alcibiades. These are the laws (*pointing to some tablets, fresh from the engraver's, which are arranged against the wall*) which are enacted by the people in Parliament assembled, directing what the citizens are to do, and what they are not to do.

Alc. And they must do what is right, and not do what is wrong?

Per. Certainly.

Alc. And supposing it is a few men who make the enactments, what are they called then?

Per. Whatever is enacted by the ruling power in the state, after due deliberation, is called law.

Alc. Even if it is made by a tyrant?

Per. Yes.

Alc. But what is meant, then, by lawlessness and violence? Are not these the terms employed when the stronger compels the weaker by force to do what he pleases?

Per. I suppose so.

Alc. Then if a tyrant compels the citizens by force to submit to the laws which he has made, this is lawlessness?

Per. (beginning to be puzzled). Well, I withdraw from the definition of law

those enactments which are enforced by a tyrant.

Alc. But supposing the laws are imposed by the few on the many, not by persuasion, but by force, is not this lawlessness too?

Per. (fidgeting). Yes, wherever there is violence there cannot be law.

Alc. And supposing violence is employed by the many against the few, and laws imposed on them by this means, will not this be lawlessness once more?

Per. (testily). Yes, I dare say it would; I, too, used to indulge in this sort of hair-splitting, when I was your age, and thought myself very clever at it.

Alc. (tittering). Ah, Pericles, how I wish I had known you when you were at your cleverest!

Thus the old lion was baited and worried by the young whelp; and thus early had the lion's whelp learnt to delight in the use of those claws which were destined to tear the bowels of his native land.

The renown of Pericles as a statesman has obscured his exploits as a general, which were, however, considerable. Whenever prompt and decisive action in the field were called for he was never found wanting. At that terrible moment when Eubœa was in revolt, when the Athenian garrison had just been butchered at Megara, and a powerful army was marching under the Spartan king on Athens, it was his decision which saved the state. The memory of that crisis dwelt long in the mind of the Athenians, as we see from an allusion in *The Clouds* of Aristophanes. A disciple of Socrates shows the aged Strepsiades a map, and points out the various lands and islands delineated on it. *Disciple.* "And this is Eubœa, as you see, stretched all along here." *Strepsiades (chuckling).* "Ay, ay, we gave it a rare stretching (an allusion to the rack) in Pericles' days."

Hardly was this cloud dispersed, when a yet greater danger threatened the imperial city from Samos,

And here again Pericles was equal to the emergency, conducting in person the fleet—which after a severe struggle reduced this powerful island from the position of a dangerous rebel to that of a submissive and useful ally. It was this subdivision of energy, this ability to serve the state in every possible direction, which constituted the ideal of Greek citizenship; and the decay of that ideal marks the decline of the Greek character. "When we come to the age of Demosthenes we no longer find general and statesman united in the same person."

But it is of Pericles as he appears in the pages of Thucydides, as the main instigator and promoter of the final breach with Sparta, that we wish especially to speak. Mr. Abbott has passed a severe judgment on the action of Pericles during this, the last stage of his career. Our estimate of the policy of Pericles at this crisis must depend on two considerations: first, could the struggle with the Peloponnesian League have been avoided without ruinous concessions; and, secondly, were the resources of Athens adequate to sustain the contest? As to the first point, it seems to us clear that at the moment before the Peloponnesian War broke out the relations between Athens and the confederate cities of Hellas which confronted her had reached a point of tension which rendered a rupture inevitable. From the moment when Themistocles outwitted the Spartans, and thus enabled his countrymen to surround themselves with impregnable walls, the growth of that city, which was every year raising new towers and temples within sight of the shores of Salamis, was watched with jealous eyes by a score of envious neighbours. To this natural jealousy of a rival city there was added another and yet stronger ground of hostility. That gradual process which converted a number of independent allies into tributary subjects of Athens struck at the root of the most cherished sentiment of the Greek mind, the sentiment

which led every individual city to regard itself as an independent unit, and to resent any attempt at dictation or interference from outside. Not less violent than the hatred of the citizen towards "that savage and bloodthirsty thing" a tyrant, was the indignation which was kindled by the rise of a tyrant city among the independent communities of Hellas. Thus during many years there had been slowly accumulating a mass of combustible material, and a spark was only needed to set all Hellas in a blaze. That spark was supplied by the interference of Athens in the quarrel between Corinth and Corcyra. It may, indeed, be urged that without the co-operation of Sparta it would have been impossible for the states hostile to Athens to raise an effective coalition against her; and Sparta seemed inclined for an amicable settlement. But in reality the peace party in Sparta was represented by only a small minority, headed by Archidamus the king. The real power of the state was wielded by the Ephors; and the Ephors were furiously anti-Athenian. If any doubt remained on this point, it would be dispelled by the emphatic declaration of Thucydides; the real cause of the war, he says, was the growth of the Athenian power, and the alarm occasioned thereby in the Spartans.

On the question whether the power of Athens was such as to give her a reasonable hope of victory there is surely no room for hesitation. The course of the war itself affords the clearest evidence that had the Athenians exercised the most ordinary prudence and self-restraint they would have emerged triumphant from the struggle. Nothing but their own suicidal folly could have brought about the final catastrophe which, after twenty-seven years of exhausting warfare, laid them at the feet of their enemies. If it was a crime in Pericles to credit his countrymen with the possession of a minimum of common sense, we must then charge him with wilfully betraying the interests of his native

city. Judged on any other ground his policy was not only justifiable, but the only policy which was consistent with Athenian dignity and honour.

We will now give some account of the three memorable occasions on which Pericles stands forth prominently as the great interpreter of the best instincts of his fellow-citizens. The first of these brings us to the eve of the Peloponnesian war. The storm which has long been gathering round the imperial city is ready to break. On all sides she is surrounded by jealous rivals or rebellious subjects, eager for her destruction. Northward lowers the sullen rancour of Thebes. To the west lies Corinth, bitterest of all her foes, once the greatest centre of commerce in Hellas, but now degraded from that eminence by this new mistress of the sea. Nearer at hand the Megarians are writhing under the restrictions which have crippled their trade; and in the heart of Peloponnesus a rude race of unlettered soldiers chafes under a sense of diminished prestige, aggravated by that blind malignity which dull men feel towards those who are more gifted than themselves. A higher feeling connects itself with the hostility of Ægina, now driven to extremity by that proud city with whom she has fought side by side against the Persian,—Ægina, the mother of heroes, the nurse of great athletes, in arts and in arms not the least city of Hellas, whose cruel fate drew many a note of sadness from the noble muse of Pindar. All these, and many more, are arrayed against the tyrant of the Ægean; and now the last word has come from Sparta: "Let the cities of Hellas go free, and we will sheathe the sword." Is it to be peace or war? The assembly is met, and many have tried to answer that question, when Pericles mounts the *bema* and in clear and unanswerable words points out the only path which the honour and interest of Athens leave open to her. While others hesitate he has no hesitation; Athens must never yield to Sparta. Let them

not be deceived by the triviality of the demands which have been put forward by the Peloponnesians, as though by yielding here they could avert the war. Those claims are mere trials of their constancy, and if they give way others and yet others will follow, until the empire of Athens is gradually frittered away. No free state can yield to an unjustifiable demand, however trivial in itself, from a neighbour, without fatally compromising its dignity and power. They are sure of success if they will only restrain their ambition and not attempt to add to their possessions during the war. Their enemies are divided among themselves and incapable of sustained effort for a common purpose. This, then, must be their reply: they will open their ports to Megara when Sparta opens her gates to the stranger; they will let the cities of Hellas go free when the Spartans leave off meddling with the political institutions of their allies. Let them not abandon in a moment of faint-heartedness that proud fabric of empire which has only been built up by long years of self-sacrifice and toil.

How the counsel of Pericles prevailed with the Athenians and led them to reject the ultimatum of Sparta, how the war broke out, and how the rural population of Attica abandoned their homes and flocked into the city, are matters too familiar to be dwelt upon here. The second great appearance of Pericles connects itself with one of the most memorable scenes in history. The first year of the war is over, and the whole population of Athens is assembled in the fairest suburb of the city. The last tribute has just been paid to those citizens who have fallen in defence of their country. Their bones have been laid in the public sepulchre, and now the vast crowd is gathered round a tall platform of stone to listen to those words of eulogy on the dead and comfort to the living which custom has appointed as a fitting close to the ceremony. The crowd opens a lane,

and the lofty figure of Pericles approaches and slowly mounts the steps of the platform. His eyes dwell sadly for a moment on the mourning dresses and tear-stained faces which appear at intervals among the throng. Then the murmurs of the men and the sobs of the women are hushed, as the tones of that Olympian voice fall thrilling on their ears.

"I cannot," he says, "commend the custom which has brought me here to address you to-day. It seems to me that no words of mine can add anything to the impressive spectacle of a whole people in mourning. But since I have been chosen to perform this duty I must do my best to pay to those who have died for Athens the tribute of eulogy which is their due. And how can I most fitly praise the dead? Surely by showing you how glorious is the city for which they gave their lives." Then follows that remarkable picture of the political and social institutions of Athens "which the world," says Mr. Abbott, "accepts as an ideal description of democratic government." Throughout these chapters there runs a subtle vein of contrast with the dull routine of Spartan life. "In a word," says the orator, concluding this part of his address, "Athens is the school of Hellas, and the training of her citizens is such that they are qualified to serve her in any capacity, whether in peace or war. This is no idle boast, but the simple truth, as is proved by the actual power of our state. She alone rises above her reputation in the hour of trial. No enemy need reproach himself with having suffered defeat at the hands of such a foe; no subject need be ashamed of being ruled by such a mistress. We need no Homer to sing our praises; our valour has carried us to the ends of the earth, and every land bears the indelible stamp of our friendship or our enmity. Such, then, is the city for which these men fell; such is the city which bids you to emulate their deeds." How strange to us is the ground on which Pericles here and elsewhere bids his

countrymen rest their hope of immortality for the cherished name of Athens—the ground, namely, of her material grandeur and her empire over Greeks. The words were still fresh in his hearers' ears when that empire was already fast slipping from her grasp. Dominions far mightier than hers have risen in her place, and of these too hardly one stone is left standing on another. But those intellectual glories on which the orator hardly bestows a passing allusion have survived the wreck of a hundred kingdoms, and still hold undiminished sway over the hearts of men. In what follows there is a truer if not a loftier note: "The highest tribute to the memory of the dead has now been paid. For our city owes her greatness, which I have been commemorating, to the deeds of these men and others like them. Therefore, in exalting Athens, I have been exalting them. Their glorious death has placed their character as men above dispute. If any of their lives had been previously not free from stain, they have effaced that stain by the crowning act of their career. Was any among them rich? He put away the thought of his riches. Was any poor? He set aside his hopes for the future. One hope alone they held fast to, the hope of repelling their country's foes; and so when the supreme moment came they did not flinch, but held their ground, and falling won themselves immortal fame." Before dismissing the subject of this famous speech we cannot refrain from quoting that memorable definition of the whole duty of woman which seems to betray rather the sardonic humour of the historian than the chivalrous spirit of the lover of Aspasia: "To the widows of the slain I will only say this; if they will show themselves no weaker than nature has made them, and if their name is never mentioned among the men either for praise or blame, they will have reached the summit of female virtue!"

We come now to the closing scene in the life of Pericles. It is the second

year of the war, and the summer is at its height. From the walls of the city the Athenians can see the smoke rising from their ruined homesteads, and the devastation of their crops. For the annual invasion of the Peloponnesian army is just over, and the work of destruction has been carried to the very gates of Athens. But gloomy as is that prospect, far greater horrors await them when they turn their eyes towards the town. For there the plague is still raging with undiminished fury, and the vast crowds huddled within the limits of the walls are perishing like sheep. The open conduits are thronged by naked and infected wretches, striving in vain to quench the burning thirst which consumes them. Even the temples are filled with dead and dying, and in every open space rises the flame of funeral pyres. Meanwhile no news comes from abroad which might raise the fainting courage of the Athenians in this moment of terror and calamity. The siege of Potidea still drags wearily on, and a large reinforcement sent to the aid of the beleaguering army has carried the infection into the Athenian camp, and returned itself decimated by disease. Goaded into fury by their sufferings, the citizens turn fiercely on him who seems the author of all this woe. At every corner of the streets are seen excited knots of men in angry debate. Where were now the hopes by which he had led them into this struggle? What had they gained by following his advice? A wasted territory and a plague-stricken city! For some time Pericles remains deaf to all this clamour. But at length he deems it expedient to summon the Assembly, and as the news spreads a tumultuous crowd rushes to the place of meeting. Far different was the audience which he addressed two years ago. Then they were burning with warlike ardour, full of proud confidence in their great leader. Now they are vying with one another which shall cast the first stone at him. Above a sea of hostile faces rises al-

most for the last time the majestic form of the aged statesman. Thirty years of toil in the public service, and the sorrows which have latterly clouded his domestic life, have done their work upon him. Yet the fire in his eye is not quenched, and his tone is as haughty as ever. It is no attitude of apology or self-defence which he assumes; his words are full of high self-confidence and fierce defiance. He reproaches his fellow-citizens in no measured terms. The temper they are displaying is unreasonable and unmanly. Private disasters may be made good, if the public weal is preserved. But public calamity means private ruin. The vessel of the state holds their all, and with that vessel they must sink or swim. Why, then, are they angry with him? They adopted his advice with their eyes open; and what else could they have done, when the choice lay between resistance and slavery? But now they are cowed by misfortune, and, blinded by present ills, they have no eyes for future gain. He will tell them something which he has been keeping back for a crisis like the present one, and which ought to act like a spell on their drooping spirits. They do not realise the extent of their power! They are absolute masters of the sea, which means that half the world is in their hands! And what is the loss of lands and houses compared with a power like this? They cannot now draw back with safety; all the world hates them as tyrants, and that timorous policy of conciliation which may suit very well with the position of a subject city is suicidal weakness in an empire like theirs. All their calamities, excepting the plague, are such as any one could have foreseen; and for that exception fortune is to blame, not he. Athens has gained a name among all men for endurance under misfortune and martial enterprise. She has raised a power which has never been equalled, and the fame of her daring and her material

greatness will go down to all posterity. Remembering this, let them show a spirit of cheerfulness under their present misfortunes, being assured that this spirit is the best pledge of public and private security.

This was Pericles' last great effort. Yet a few more months, and that voice which has so often been raised to comfort, to counsel, and to inspire, is still; that hand which for thirty years has "wielded at will that fierce democracy" is cold. The master helmsman lies low; and the gallant vessel which under his skilful pilotage has weathered many an hour of darkness and peril is drifting slowly but surely towards the breakers.

His life forms a connecting link between the old Hellenism and the new. His early days were passed among the ideal types of Greek character which are reflected for us in the genial pages of Herodotus. There we see a young people just awakening to a consciousness of its powers, looking out with eyes full of wonder and hope as nature unfolds her marvels to its bright intelligence. Then comes a period of twilight, through which the great figures of Themistocles, Cimon, and Aristides move dimly. When we emerge once more into the broad light of history we find a nation already growing old, disillusioned, fast losing hold on the ideals of the past. The beauty of faith and the joyousness of worship are fading away, and the canker of scepticism has begun to eat into the life of the nation. The works of those writers who image most faithfully the spirit of this new era, the historian Thucydides and the dramatist Euripides, are "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," burdened with the sadness of a people which has outlived its illusions. Night has fallen on the hopes and aspirations of mankind; and as yet there is no sign of another dawn.

H. L. HAVELL.

MY LADY'S SONG.

SING again, oh, lady mine,
 Your rare ditty of the Rhine !
 Lovely visions rise and float
 On the wave of each full note ;
 Silvery day-breaks brighten slow,
 Sunsets blush on mountain snow,
 Moonlight shivers on the sea,
 Autumn burns in bush and tree,
 And a charm lights everything—
 As I listen and you sing.

Blowing willows bend and sigh,
 Whispering rivers wander by,
 Through the pines sweep sea-tones soft,
 Sailing rooks shout loud aloft,
 Wild-fowl crooning cross the mere,
 Thrustles in the dawn call clear,
 Vanished faces gleam and go,
 Silenced voices murmur low,
 Gentlest memories come and cling—
 As I listen and you sing.

Ah! repeat the music's tale,
Love shall perish not, nor fail !
 I forget the fear of death,
 Breathe in thought immortal breath ;
 I believe in broadening truth,
 In the generous creeds of youth,
 In consoling hopes that climb
 Up to some triumphal time,
 And a dream of splendour bring—
 As I listen and you sing.

JOSEPH TRUMAN

THE WOMAN IN THE MORGUE.

I.

WHEN Blake Shorland stepped from the steamer *Sauvage* upon the quay at Noumea, he proceeded, with the caution and alertness of the trained newspaper correspondent, to take his bearings. So this was New Caledonia, the home of outcast, criminal France, the recent refuge of Communist exiles, of Rochefort, Louise Michel, Felix Rastoul, and the rest! Over there to the left was Ile Nou, the convict prison; on the hill was the Governor's residence; below, the Government establishments with their red-tiled roofs; and hidden away in a luxuriance of tropical vegetation lay the houses of the citizens. He strokes his black moustache thoughtfully for a moment, and puts his hand to his pocket to see that his letters of introduction from the French Consul at Sydney to Governor Rapont and his journalistic credentials are there. Then he remembers the advice of the captain of the *Sauvage* as to the best hotel, and starts towards it. He has not been shown the way, but his instincts direct him. He knows where it ought to be, according to the configuration of the town.

It proved to be where he thought, and, having engaged rooms, sent for his portmanteau, and refreshed himself, he set out to explore the place. His prudent mind told him that he ought to proceed at once to Governor Rapont and present his letters of commendation, for he was in a country where feeling was running high against English interference with the deportation of French convicts to New Caledonia, and the intention of France to annex the New Hebrides. But he knew also that so soon as these letters were presented, his freedom of action would be to a certain extent restricted, either by a courtesy which would be so constant

as to become a species of surveillance, or by an injunction which would have no such gloss. He had come to study French government in New Caledonia, to gauge the extent of the menace that the convict question bore towards Australia, and to tell his tale to Australia and such other countries as would listen. The task was not altogether pleasant, and had its dangers, too, of a certain kind. But Blake Shorland had had both unpleasantness and peril many times in his life, and he borrowed no trouble. Proceeding along the Rue de l'Alma, and listening to the babble of French voices round him, he suddenly paused in an abstracted way that he had, and said to himself, "Somehow it brings back Paris to me, and that last night there, when I bade Glasham good-bye. Poor old boy! I'm glad better days are coming for him. Sure to be better if he marries Clare. Why *didn't* he do it seven years ago, and save all that other horrible business?"

Then he moved on, noticing that he was the object of attention and remark; but he did not dislike that particularly, and it being day-time and in the street he felt himself quite safe. Glancing up at a doorway he saw a familiar Paris name,—the Café Voisin. Interesting, this! It was in the Café Voisin that he had touched a farewell glass with Luke Glasham, the one bosom friend of his life. He entered this Café Voisin with the thought of how vague would be the society which he would meet in such a reproduction of a famous Parisian haunt. He thought of a *café chantant* at Cairo, and said to himself, "It can't be worse than that." He was right. The world has no shambles of ghastly frivolity and debauchery like those of Cairo.

The Café Voisin had many visitors,

and Blake Shorland saw at a glance who they were; *libérés*, or ticket-of-leave men, a drunken soldier or two, and a few of that class who with an army are called camp-followers, in an English town roughs, in a French convict settlement *récidivistes*. He felt at once that he had entered upon an unpleasant experience; but he also felt that the luck would be with him, as it had been with him so many times these late years. He sat down at a small table, and called to a haggard waitress near to bring him a cup of coffee. He then saw that there was another female in the room. Leaning with her elbows on the bar and her chin in her hands, a woman fixed her eyes on him as he opened and made a pretence of reading *La Nouvelle Calédonie*. Looking up, he met her eyes again; there was hatred in them if ever he saw it, or what might be called constitutional *diablerie*. He felt that this woman, whoever she was, had power of an extraordinary kind; too much power for her to be altogether vile, too physically healthy to be of that class to which the girl who handed him his coffee belonged. There was not a sign of gaudiness about her; not a ring, a necklace, or a bracelet. Her dress was of cotton, faintly pink and perfectly clean; her hair was brown, and waving away loosely from her forehead—but her eyes! Was there a touch of insanity there? Perhaps because they were rather deeply set, though large, and because they seemed to glow in the shadows made by the brows, the unnatural intensity was deepened. But Blake Shorland could not get rid of the feeling of active malevolence in them. The mouth was neither small nor sensuous, the chin was strong without being coarse, the figure was not suggestive. The hands,—confound the woman's eyes! Why could he not get rid of the unpleasant feeling they gave him? She suddenly turned her head, not moving her chin from her hands, however, or altering her position, and said something to a man at her elbow,—

rather the wreck of a man; one who bore tokens of having been some time the *roi gaillard* of a lawless court; now only a disreputable citizen of a far from reputable French colony.

Immediately a murmur was heard: "A spy, an English spy!" From the mouths of absinthe-drinking *libérés* it passed to the mouths of rum-drinking *récidivistes*. It did not escape Blake Shorland's ears, but he betrayed no sign. He sipped his coffee and appeared absorbed in his paper, thinking, however, carefully of the difficulties of his position. He knew that to rise now and make for the door would be of no advantage, for a number of the excited crowd were between him and it. To show fear might precipitate a catastrophe with this drunken mob. He had nerve and coolness, though by nature he was of sensitive mould, and men had called him something of a poet.

Presently a dirty outcast passed him and rudely jostled his arm as he drank his coffee. He begged the outcast's pardon quietly and conventionally in French, and went on reading. A moment later the paper was snatched from his hand, and a red-faced unkempt scoundrel yelled in his face, "Spy of the devil! English thief!" Then he rose quickly and stepped back to the wall, feeling for the spring in his sword-stick which he held closely pressed to his side. This same sword-stick had been of use to him on the Fly River in New Guinea.

"Down with the English spy!" rang through the room, joined to vile French oaths. Meanwhile the woman had not changed her position, but closely watched the tumult which she herself had roused. She did not stir when she saw a glass hurled at the unoffending Englishman's head. A hand reached over and seized a bottle behind her. The bottle was raised and still she did not move, though her fingers pressed her cheeks with a spasmodic quickness. Three times Blake Shorland had said, in

well-controlled tones, "Frenchmen, I am no spy," but they gave him the lie with increasing uproar. Had not Gabrielle Rouget said that he was an English spy? As the bottle was poised in the air with a fiendish cry of "A baptism! a baptism!" and Blake Shorland was debating on his chances of avoiding it, and on the wisdom of now drawing his weapon and cutting his way through the mob, there came from the door a call of "Hold! hold!" and a young military officer dashed in, his arm raised against the brutal missile in the hands of the ticket-of-leave man, whose patriotism was purely a matter of absinthe, natural evil, and Gabrielle Rouget. "Wretches! scum of France!" he said; "what is this here? And you, Gabrielle, do you sleep? Do you permit murder?"

She met the fire in his eyes without flinching, and some one answered for her, "He is an English spy!"

"Take care, Gabrielle," the young officer went on, "take care; you go too far!" And waving back the sullen crowd, now joined by the woman, who had not yet spoken, he said, "Who are you, monsieur? What is it?"

Blake Shorland drew from his pocket his letter of introduction and his credentials. Gabrielle now stood at the young officer's elbow. As the papers were handed over a photograph dropped from among them and fell face upward to the floor. Blake Shorland stooped to pick it up, but as he did so he heard a suppressed cry from Gabrielle Rouget. He looked up. She pointed to the portrait and said gaspingly, "Look, look! My God!" She leaned forward and touched the portrait in his hand. "Look, look!" she said again. And then she paused, and a moment after laughed. But there was no mirth in her laughter; it had a hollow and nervous sound. Meanwhile the young officer had glanced at the papers, and now handed them back with the words, "All is right, monsieur—Eh! Gabrielle! Well? What is the matter?" But

she drew back, keeping her eyes fixed on Blake Shorland, and did not answer.

The young officer stretched out his hand: "I am Alençon Barré, lieutenant, at your service. Let us go, monsieur." But there was some unusual devilry working in that drunken crowd. The sight of an officer was not sufficient to awe them into obedience. Bad blood had been fired, and it was fed by some cause unknown to Alençon Barré, but to be understood fully hereafter. The mass surged forward, with cries of, "Down with the Englishman!" Alençon Barré drew his sword. "Villains!" he cried, and pressed the point against the breast of the leader, who at this drew back. Then Gabrielle's voice was heard, "No, no, my children," she said; "no more of that to-day,—not to-day. Let the Englishman go." Her face was white and drawn, but her eyes burned with an intense brilliancy. Blake Shorland had been turning over in his mind all the events of the last few moments with the novelist's eye for situations and character, and he thought as he looked at her that just such women had made a hell of the Paris Commune. But one thought dominated all others. What did her excitement when she saw the portrait mean,—the portrait of Luke Glasham? He felt that he was standing on the verge of a tragedy, at least a tragic possibility.

Alençon Barré's sword again made a clear circle round him, and he said, "Shame, Frenchmen! This gentleman is no spy. He is the friend of the governor, he is my friend. He is English—well! Where is the English flag? There are the French—good French—protected. Where is the French flag? There shall the English—good English—be safe."

As they moved towards the door Gabrielle glided forward, and, touching the arm of Blake Shorland, said in English, "You will come again, monsieur? You shall be safe altogether. You will come?" And looking at

her searchingly, he answered slowly, "Yes, I will come."

As they left behind them the turbulent crowd and stepped into the street, Alençon Barré said: "You should have gone at once to the Hôtel du Gouverneur and presented your letters, monsieur; or at least have avoided the Café Voisin. Noumea is the White-chapel and the Pentonville of France, remember."

And Blake Shorland acknowledged his error, thanked his rescuer, enjoyed the situation, and was taken to Governor Rapont, by whom he was cordially received and then turned over to the hospitality of the officers of the post. It was conveyed to him later in the evening by letters of commendation from the governor that he should be free to go anywhere in the islands and to see whatever was to be seen, from convict prison to Hôtel Dieu.

II.

SITTING that night in the rooms of Alençon Barré, this question was put to Blake Shorland by his host: "What did Gabrielle say to you as we left, monsieur? And why did she act so, when she saw the portrait? I do not understand English well, and it was not quite clear."

Blake Shorland could think rapidly, and come to conclusions in the same fashion. He had a clear conviction that he ought to take Alençon Barré into his confidence. If Gabrielle Rouget should have any special connection with Luke Glasham there might be need of the active counsel of a friend like this young officer, whose face carried every token of chivalry and gentle birth. Better that Alençon Barré should know all, than that he should know in part and some day unwittingly make trouble. So he raised frank eyes to those of the other, and told the story of the man whose portrait had so affected Gabrielle Rouget.

"Monsieur Barré," he said, "I will tell you of this man first, and then

perhaps it will be easier to answer your questions." He took the portrait from his pocket, passed it over, and continued. "I received this portrait in a letter from England the day that I left Sydney, and as I was getting aboard the boat. I placed it among those papers which you read. It fell out as you know on the floor of the *café*, and you saw the rest. The man whose face is before you there, and who sent that to me, was my best friend in the days when I was at school and college. Afterwards, when a law-student, and, still later, when I began to practise my profession, we lived together in a rare old house at Fulham, with high garden walls and,—but I forget, you do not know London perhaps. Yes! Well, the house is neither here nor there; but I like to think of those days and of that home. Luke Glasham,—that was my friend's name—was an artist and a clever one. He had made a reputation by his paintings of Egyptian and Algerian life. He was certainly brilliant and original, and an indefatigable worker. Suddenly one winter he became less industrious, and alarmingly fitful in his work; gloomy one day and elated the next, and in fact generally uncomfortable. What was the matter? Wait. Strange to say, although we were such friends, we chose different sets of society, and therefore seldom appeared at the same houses or knew the same people. He liked most things continental; he found his social pleasures in that polite Bohemia which indulges in midnight suppers and permits ladies to smoke cigarettes after dinner, which dines at rich men's tables and is hob-a-nob with Russian Counts, Persian Ministers, and German Barons. That was not to my taste, save as a kind of dramatic entertainment to be indulged in at intervals like a Drury Lane pantomime. But though I had no practical or visible proof that such was the case, I knew Luke Glasham's malady to be a woman. I taxed him with it. He did not deny it. He was painting at the time, I re-

member, and he testily and unprofitably drew his brush across the face of a Copt woman that he was working at and bit off the end of a cigar. I asked him if it was another man's wife; he promptly said, no. I asked him if there were any unpleasant complications, any inconsiderate pressure from the girl's parents or brothers; and he promptly told me to be damned. I told him I thought he ought to know that an ambitious man might as well drown himself at once as get a fast woman in his path. Then he developed a faculty for temper and profanity that stunned me. But the upshot was that I found the case straight enough to all appearances. The woman was a foreigner and not easy to win; was beautiful, had a fine voice, loved admiration, and possessed a scamp of a brother who wanted her to marry one who was not a Frenchman, so that, according to her father's will, a large portion of her fortune would come to him. . . . Were you going to speak? No? very well. Things apparently got worse and worse. Glasham neglected business and everything else, became in fact a nuisance. He never offered to take me to see the lady, and I did not suggest it, did not know in fact where she lived. What galled me most in the matter was that Glasham had been for years attentive to a cousin of mine, Clare Hazard, almost my sister, indeed, since she had been brought up in my father's house; and I knew that from a child she had adored him. However, these things seldom work out according to the law of Nature, and so I chewed the cud of dissatisfaction and kept the thing from my cousin as long as I could. About the time matters seemed at a crisis with Glasham I was taken ill, or rather was knocked up from over-work, and was ordered south. My mother and Glasham accompanied me as far as Paris. Here Glasham left me to return to England, and in the *Café Voisin*, at Paris—yes, mark that—we had our farewell—farewell, for I have never seen him since. While

in Italy I was prostrated with illness, and when I got up, Clare told me that Luke Glasham was married and had gone to Egypt. She, poor girl, bore it like a heroine. I was savage, but it was too late. I was ordered to go to the South Seas, at least to take a long sea-voyage; and though I could not well afford it I started for Australia. On my way out I stopped off one boat to try and find Luke Glasham in Egypt, but failed. I heard of him at Cairo, and learned also that her brother had joined them. Two years passed, and then I got a letter from an old friend, saying that Glasham's wife had eloped with a Frenchman. Another year, and then a letter from Glasham himself, saying that his wife was dead; that he had identified her body in the Morgue at Paris,—found drowned, and all that! He believed that remorse had driven her to suicide. But he had no trace of the brother, no trace of the villain whom he had hunted all Europe and America over to find. Again, another three years, and he writes me that he is going to be married to Clare Hazard on the twenty-sixth of this month. With that information came this portrait. I tell you all, M. Barré, because I feel that this woman Gabrielle has some connection with the past life of my friend Luke Glasham. She recognised the face, and you saw the effect. Now will you tell me what you know about her?"

Blake Shorland had been much more communicative than was his custom. But he knew men. This man had done him a service, and that made towards friendship on both sides. He was an officer and a gentleman, and so the Englishman showed his hand. Then he wanted information and perhaps much more, though what that would be he could not yet tell.

M. Barré had smoked cigarettes freely during Blake Shorland's narrative. At the end he said with peculiar emphasis, "Was your friend's wife a Frenchwoman?"

"Yes."

"Was her name Laroche?"

"I think that was it. I am not sure. It is six years since I heard it, and then it was only told me once by my cousin. Glasham always spoke of her as Lucile."

"Yes, Lucile when she was a good woman; something else when she was the other—that!"

Blake Shorland sprang to his feet. "You think that Lucile Laroche and Gabrielle——!"

"That Lucile Laroche and Gabrielle Rouget are one? Yes! But that Lucile Laroche was the wife of your friend? Well, that is another matter. But we shall see soon. Listen, M. Shorland. A scoundrel, Henri Durien, was sent out here for killing an American at cards. The jury called it murder, but recommended him to mercy, and he escaped the guillotine. He had the sympathy of the women, the Press did not deal hardly with him, and the Public Prosecutor did not seem to push the case as he might have done. But that was no matter to us. The woman, Gabrielle Rouget, followed him here, where he is a prisoner for life. He is engaged in road-making with other prisoners. She keeps the Café Voisin. Now here is the point which concerns your story. Once, when Gabrielle was permitted to see Henri, they quarrelled. I was acting as governor of the prison at the time, saw the meeting and heard the quarrel. No one else was near. Henri accused her of being intimate with a young officer of the post. I am sure there was no truth in it, for Gabrielle is not inclined to have followers of that kind. But Henri had got the idea from some source; perhaps by the convicts' 'Underground Railway,' which has connection even with the Hôtel de Gouverneur. Through it the prisoners know all that is going on, and more. In response to Henri's accusation Gabrielle replied, 'As I live, Henri, it is a lie.' He sardonically rejoined, 'But you do not live. You are dead, dead I tell you! You were found drowned and carried to the Morgue and properly identified,—

not by me, curse you, Lucile Laroche! And then you were properly buried, and not by me either, nor at my cost, curse you again! You are dead, I tell you!' She looked at him as she looked at you the other day, dazed and spectre-like, and said, 'Henri, I gave up my life once to a husband to please my brother. He was a villain, my brother! I gave it up a second time to please you, and because I loved you. I left behind me name, fortune, Paris, France, everything, to follow you here. I was willing to live here, while you lived, or till you should be free. And you curse me,—you dare to curse me! Now I will give you some cause to curse. You are a devil,—I am a sinner. Henceforth I shall be devil and sinner too.' With that she left him. Since then she *has* been both devil and sinner, but not in the way he meant; simply a danger to the safety of this dangerous community; a Louise Michel (we had her here too!) without Louise Michel's high motives. Gabrielle Rouget may cause a revolt of the convicts some day, to secure the escape of Henri Durien, or to give them all a chance. The governor does not believe it, but I do. You noticed what I said about the Morgue, and that?"

Blake Shorland paced up and down the room several times, and then said: "Great heaven, suppose that by some hideous chance this woman, Gabrielle Rouget, or Lucile Laroche, should prove to be Luke Glasham's wife! The evidence is so strong, so overwhelming. There evidently was some trick, some strange mistake, about the Morgue and the burial. This is the fourteenth of January; Luke Glasham is to be married on the twenty-sixth! M. Barré, if this woman *should* be his wife, hell never brewed an uglier scrape. There is Glasham,—that's pitiful; there is Clare Hazard,—that's pitiful and horrible. For nothing can be done; no cables from here, the *Sauvage* gone, no vessels or mails for two weeks. . . . Ah well! There's only one thing to do,—find out the

truth from Gabrielle if I can, and trust in Providence."

"That is well spoken," said M. Barré. "Have some more champagne. I make the most of the pleasure of your company, and so I break another bottle. Besides, it may be the last I shall get for a time. There is trouble brewing at Bomparré—a native insurrection—and we may have to leave for there at any moment. However this affair with Gabrielle turns out, you have your business to do. You want to see the country, to study our life—well, come with us. We will house you and feed you as we feed, and you shall have your tobacco at army prices."

Much as Blake Shorland was moved by the events of the last few hours he was enough the soldier and the man of the world to face possible troubles without the loss of appetite, sleep, or nerve. He had learned those tricks by hard experience. He had cultivated a habit of deliberateness which saved his digestion and preserved his mental equilibrium, and he had a happy faculty for doing the right thing at the right time. From his standpoint, his late adventure in the Café Voisin was the right thing, serious as the consequences might have been or might yet be. No man ever believed more in his star of fortune than did Blake Shorland. His life had been a series of escapes; it was always a case of one being taken and the other left. So now he promptly met the French officer's exuberance of spirits with a hearty gaiety, and drank his champagne with genial compliment and happy anecdote. It was late when they parted; the Frenchman excited, beaming, joyous, the Englishman responsive, but cool in mind still.

III.

AFTER breakfast next morning Blake Shorland expressed to M. Barré his intention of going to see Gabrielle Rouget. He was told that he must not go alone; a guard would be too conspicuous and might invite trouble;

he himself would accompany his friend M. Shorland.

The hot January day was reflected from the red streets, white houses, and waxen leaves of the tropical foliage, with enervating force. An occasional ex-convict sullenly lounged by, touching his cap as he was required by law; a native here and there leaned idly against a house-wall or a magnolia tree; ill-looking men and women loitered in the shade. A Government officer went languidly by in full uniform,—even the governor wore his uniform at all times to encourage respect—and the *cafés* were filling. Every hour was "absinthe-hour" in Noumea, which had improved on Paris in this particular. A knot of men stood at the door of the Café Voisin gesticulating nervously. One was pointing to a notice that had been posted on the bulletin-board of the *café* announcing that all citizens must hold themselves in readiness to bear arms in case the rumoured insurrection among the natives proved serious. It was an evil-looking company that thus discussed Governor Rapont's commands. As the two passed in, Blake Shorland noticed that one of the group made a menacing action towards Alençon Barré. The French officer may have been used to this sort of thing, but to the Englishman it looked ominous.

Gabrielle was talking to an ex-convict as they entered. Her face looked worn; there was a hectic spot on each cheek and dark circles round the eyes. There was something tigress-like about the poise of the head and neck, something intense and daring about the woman altogether. Her companion muttered between his teeth, "The cursed Englishman, the spy!"

But she turned on him sharply,—
"Go away, Gaspard, I have business. So have you—go!" And the ex-convict slowly left the *café*, still muttering.

"Well, Gabrielle, how are your children this morning? They look gloomy enough for the guillotine, eh?" said M. Barré.

"They are much trouble, sometimes,—my children."

"Last night, for instance."

"Yes, last night. But Monsieur was unwise. We do not love the English here. They do not find it comfortable on English soil, in Australia—my children! Not so comfortable as Louis Philippe and Louis Napoleon. Criminal kings with gold are welcome; criminal subjects without gold—ah, that is another matter, M. Barré. It is just the same. They may be gentlemen,—many are; if they escape to Australia or go as *libérés*, they are hunted down. That is English, and they hate the English—my children!"

Gabrielle's voice was directed to M. Barré, but her eyes, feverish, dilated, searching, were on Blake Shorland.

"Eh, well, Gabrielle, all English are not inhospitable. My friend here, we must be hospitable to him. The coals of fire, you know, Gabrielle. We owe him something too for yesterday. He wishes to speak to you. Be careful, Gabrielle. No communist justice, no Charlotte Corday, no treachery, citizen Gabrielle!" And M. Barré smiled gaily.

Gabrielle smiled in reply, but it was not a pleasant smile, and she said, "Treachery, M. Barré! Treachery in Noumea! There is no such thing. It is all fair in love and war. No quarter, no mercy, no hope! All is fair where all is foul, M. Barré."

M. Barré shrugged his shoulders pleasantly and replied: "If I had my way your freedom should be promptly curtailed, Gabrielle. You are an active citizen, but you are dangerous, truly."

"I like you better when you do not have your way. Yet my children do not hate you, M. Barré. You speak your thought, and they know what to expect. Your family have little more freedom in France than my children have here."

M. Barré looked at her keenly for an instant, then lighting a cigarette he said, "So, Gabrielle, so! That is

enough. You wish to speak to M. Shorland,—well!" He waved his hand to her and walked away from them.

Gabrielle paused a moment, looking sharply at Blake Shorland, then she said, "Monsieur will come with me?"

She led the way into another room, boudoir, sitting-room, breakfast-room, library, all in one. She parted the curtains at the window letting the light fall upon the face of her companion, while hers remained in the shadow. He knew the trick, and moved out of the belt of light. He felt that he was dealing with a woman of singular astuteness, with one whose wickedness was unconventional and intrepid. To his mind there came on the instant the memory of a Rocky Mountain lioness that he had seen caged in Kansas City years before; lithe, watchful, nervously powerful, superior to its surroundings, yet mastered by those surroundings,—the trick of a lock, not a trick of strength. He thought he saw in Gabrielle a woman who for a personal motive was trying to learn the trick of the lock in Noumea, France's farthest prison. For a moment they looked at each other steadily, then she said, "That portrait,—let me see it."

The hand that she held out was unsteady, and it looked strangely white and cold. He drew the photograph from his pocket and handed it to her. A flush passed across her face as she looked at it, and was followed by a pallor that became set and still like polished marble. She gazed at the portrait for a moment, then her lips parted and a great sigh broke from her. She was about to hand it back to him, but an inspiration seemed to seize her, and she threw it on the floor and put her heel upon it with a frenzied fierceness. "That is the way I treated him," she said, and she ground her heel into the face of the portrait. Then she took her foot away. "See, see," she cried, "how his face is scarred and torn! I did that. Do you know what it is to torture one who loves you? No, you

do not. You begin with shame and regret. But the sight of your lover's agonies, his indignation, his anger, madden you and you get the lust of cruelty. You become a demon. You make new wounds. You tear open old ones. You lash, you stab, you thrust, you bruise, you put acid in the sores—the sharpest nitric acid; and then you heal with a kiss of remorse, and that is acid too—carbolic acid, and it smells of death. They put it in the room where dead people are. Have you ever been to the Morgue in Paris? They use it there. And then, as he writhes before you under his tortures and will not call for help because he loves his torturer, you smile a farewell to him and leave him there, and that is pouring ether over him, and he gets suddenly cold,—bitter cold—and one man is dead; and then another man is born, or else the first man is carried to the Morgue too, you understand! And better for him if he lies in the Morgue. Lash and knife and dagger and acid can't hurt him there, even by memory. But the man that is born when the other man dies *has* memory,—dark, dreadful memory."

She paused panting with her frenzy. "A good Medea she'd make. Poor Glasham!" thought Blake Shorland.

She took up the portrait. Her frame quivered. "Avenging God!" she said, "how his face is torn! Tell me of him."

"First, who are you, Gabrielle Rouget?"

She steadied herself, though her breast still panted painfully. "Who are *you*?" she said.

"I am his friend, Blake Shorland."

"Yes, I remember your name." She threw her hands up with a laugh, a bitter hopeless laugh. Her eyes half closed, so that only light came from them, no colour. The head was thrown back with a defiant recklessness, and then she said, "I was Lucile Laroche, *his* wife,—Luke Glasham's wife."

"But his wife died. He identified her in the Morgue."

"I do not know why I speak to you

so, but I feel that the time has come to tell all to you. He did *not* identify his wife in the Morgue. That was another woman, his wife's sister, my sister whom my brother drowned for her money,—that is, he made her life such a misery! And he did not try to save her when he knew she was determined to drown herself. She was not bad; she was a thousand times better than I am, a million times better than he was. He was a devil, my brother. But he is dead now too. . . . She was taken to the Morgue. She looked like me altogether; she wore a ring of mine, and she had a mark on her shoulder the same as one on mine; her initials were the same. Luke Glasham had never seen her. He believed that I lay dead there, and he buried her for me. I thought at the time that it would be best I should be dead to him and to the world. And so I did not speak. It was all the same to my brother. He got what was left of my fortune, and I got what was left of hers. For I was dead, you see,—dead, dead, dead!"

She paused again. Neither spoke for a moment. Blake Shorland was thinking what all this meant to Clare Hazard and Luke Glasham.

"Where is he? What is he doing?" she said at length. "Tell me, I was—I am—his wife."

"Yes, you were—you are—his wife. But better if you *had* been that woman in the Morgue," he said without pity. What were this creature's feelings to him! There was his friend and the sweet-faced, true-souled Clare.

She replied, "I know, I know. Go on!"

"Luke Glasham is well. The man that was born when his wife lay before him in the Morgue has sought another woman, a good true woman who loves him and—"

"And is married to her!" interrupted Gabrielle, her face taking on again a shining whiteness and her voice becoming strained. But, as if suddenly remembering something, she laughed that strange laugh which

might have come from a soul irretrievably lost. "And is married to her?"

Blake Shorland thought of the lust of cruelty, of the wounds, and the acids of torture. "Not yet," he said; "but the marriage is fixed for the twenty-sixth of this month."

"How I could spoil all that!" And her fingers clutched the curtains against which she stood.

"Yes, you could spoil all that. But you have spoiled enough already. Don't you think if Luke Glasham does marry—and there is little chance to prevent it—that you had better be dead as you have been this last five years? To make one hell in a lifetime ought to be enough to satisfy even a woman like you."

She shivered. Her eyes looked through Blake Shorland's eyes and beyond them to something else; and then they closed. When they opened again she said, "But I have made two hells; one for him and one for myself. His passed away when that woman in the Morgue was buried. Mine goes on; it will never pass away."

Blake Shorland did not fill the pause that followed with any remark and in a moment she continued, "It is strange that I never thought of his marrying again. And now I want to kill her—just for the moment. That is the selfish devil in me. And I can make another hell for him now, as you say. It will be that, whether I will it or not, if he knows that I live. Well, what is to be done, Monsieur? There is the Morgue left. But then there is no Morgue here. Ah, well, we can make one perhaps; we can make a Morgue, Monsieur."

"Can't you see that he ought to be left the rest of his life in peace?"

"Yes, I can see that. How his face is torn!" she said again, pointing to the portrait.

"Well, then!"

"Well,—and then, Monsieur? Ah, you did not wish him to marry me. He told me so. 'A fickle foreigner,' you said. And you were right, but it

was not pleasant to me, nevertheless. I hated you then, though I had never spoken to you or seen you; not because I wanted him, but because you interfered. He said once to me that you had told the truth in that. But,—and then, Monsieur?"

"Then continue to efface yourself for ever and ever. Continue to be the woman in the Morgue."

"But others know."

"Yes, Henri Durien knows and M. Barré suspects."

"So you see!"

"But Henri Durien is a prisoner for life; he cannot hear of the marriage unless you tell him. M. Barré is a gentleman; he is my friend; his memory will be dead like you."

"For M. Barré, well! But the other,—Henri. How do you know that he is here for life? Men get pardoned, men get free, men fi—get free I tell you."

Blake Shorland noticed the interrupted word. He remembered it afterwards distinctly enough and understood its full force.

"The twenty-sixth, the twenty-sixth," she said. Then a pause, and after with a sudden sharpness, "Come to me on the twenty-fifth, and I will give you my reply, M. Shorland."

He still held the portrait in his hand. She stepped forward. "Let me see it again," she said.

He handed it to her: "You have spoiled a good face, Gabrielle Rouget."

"But the eyes are not hurt," she replied; "see how they look at one." And she handed it back.

"Yes, kindly."

"And sadly, Monsieur. As if he still remembered Lucile. Lucile! I have not been called that name for a long time. It is on my gravestone, you know. Ah, perhaps you do not know. You never saw my grave. I have. And on the tombstone is written this: *By Luke to Lucile*. And then beneath, where the grass almost hides it, the line: *I have followed my Star to the last*. You do not know what that line means; I will

tell you. Once, when we were first married, he wrote me some verses, and he called them, 'My Star, Lucile.' Here is a verse,—ah, why do you not smile, when I say I will tell you what he wrote? *Chut!* Women such as I have memories sometimes. One can admire the Heaven even if one lives in—ah, you know! Listen." And with a voice that seemed far away and not a part of herself she repeated these lines.

In my sky of Delight there's a beautiful
Star;

'Tis the Sun and the Moon of my days;
And the doors of its glory are ever ajar,
And I live in the glow of its rays.

'Tis my Winter of Joy and my Summer
of Rest,

'Tis my Future, my Present, my Past;
And though winds fill the East and the
clouds haunt the West,

I shall follow my Star to the last.

"There, that was to Lucile. What would he write to Gabrielle, to Henri's Gabrielle? to—ah, ah, ah! How droll! How droll!" And again she laughed that shuddering laugh of eternal recklessness.

It filled Blake Shorland this time with a sense of fear. He lost sight of everything,—this strange and interesting woman, and the peculiar nature of the events in which he was sharing,—and saw only Clare Hazard's ruined life, Luke Glasham's despair and the fatal twenty-sixth of January so near at hand. He could see no way out of the labyrinth of disgrace. It unnerved him more than anything that had ever happened to him, and he turned bewildered towards the door. He saw that while Gabrielle Rouget, or Lucile Laroche, lived, a dread misfortune would be ever crouching at the threshold of Luke Glasham's home; that whether the woman agreed to be silent or not the hurt to Clare Hazard would remain the same. With an angry bitterness in his voice that he did not try to hide, he said: "There is nothing more to be done now, Gabrielle,

that I can see. But it is a crime, it is a pity!"

"A pity that he did not tell the truth on the gravestone, that he did not follow his Star to the last, Monsieur? How droll! And you should see how green the grass was on my grave! Yes, it is a pity, Monsieur."

But Blake Shorland, heavy at heart, looked at her and said nothing more. He wondered why it was that he did not loathe her. Somehow, even in her shame, she compelled a kind of admiration and awe. She was the wreck of splendid possibilities, a tigress that had tasted blood. A palpitating and poisonous vitality possessed her, but through it glowed a daring and a candour that belonged to her before she became wicked, and that now half redeemed her in the eyes of this man who knew the worst of her. Even in her sin she was loyal to the scoundrel for whom she had sacrificed two lives, her own and another's. Her brow might flush with shame of the mad deed that turned her life awry, and of the degradation of her present surroundings, but her eyes looked straight into those of Blake Shorland without wavering and with the pride of strength if not of goodness.

"Yes, there is one thing more," she said. "Give me that portrait to keep—until the twenty-fifth. Then you may take it,—from the woman in the Morgue."

Blake Shorland thought for a moment. She had spoken just now without sneering, without bravado, without hardness. Her voice had even taken a tone of sadness. He felt that behind this woman's outward cruelty and varying moods there was something working that perhaps might be trusted, something in Luke Glasham's interest. He was certain that this portrait had moved her deeply. Had she come to that period of reaction in evil when there is an agonised and wistful look turned back towards the good? He could not tell, but he gave the portrait to her. If he but knew it, his judgment was right. She was trembling

between one thing and another, and the one thing would be best for Luke Glasham. Without another word they parted, the scarred portrait remaining with her.

IV.

SITTING in Alençon Barré's room an hour later, Blake Shorland told him in substance the result of his conference with Gabrielle, and begged his consideration for Luke Glasham if the worst should happen. Alençon Barré gave his word as a man of honour that the matter should be sacred to him. As they sat there a messenger came from the commandant to say that the detachment was to start that afternoon for Bompari. Then a note was handed to Blake Shorland from Governor Rapont offering him a horse and a native servant if he chose to go with the troops. This was what Blake Shorland had come for,—news and adventure. He did not hesitate, though the shadow of the twenty-fifth was hanging over him, or rather over *Clare Hazard* and *Luke Glasham*, which was much the same to him. He felt his helplessness in the matter, but determined to try to be back in *Noumea* on that date. Not that he expected anything definite, but because he had a feeling that where *Gabrielle* was on that day he ought to be.

For two days they travelled, the friendship between Alençon Barré and Blake Shorland growing hourly closer. It was the swift amalgamation of two kindred natures in the flame of a perfect sincerity; for even with the dramatic element so strongly developed in his mental and emotional constitution the Englishman was very down-right and true. His friendship was as tenacious as his head was cool.

On the evening of the third day Blake Shorland noticed that the strap of his spur was frayed. He told his native servant to attend to it. Next morning as they were starting he saw that the strap had not been mended or replaced. His language on the

occasion was pointed and confident. The fact is he was angry with himself for trusting anything to a servant. He was not used to such a luxury, and he made up his mind to live for the rest of the campaign without a servant, as he had done all his life long.

The two friends rode side by side for miles through the jungle of fern and palm, and then began to enter a more open but scrubby country. The scouts could be seen half a mile ahead. Not a sign of natives had been discovered on the march. More than once Alençon Barré had expressed his dissatisfaction at this. He knew it pointed to concentrated trouble ahead; and just as they neared the edge of the free country he rose in his saddle and looked around carefully. Blake Shorland imitated his action, and as he resumed his seat he felt his spur-strap break. He leaned back and drew up the foot to take off the spur. As he did so he felt a sudden twitch at his side, and immediately Alençon Barré swayed in his saddle with a spear in the groin. Blake Shorland caught him and prevented him falling to the ground. A wild cry rose from the jungle behind and from the clearing ahead, and in a moment the infuriated French soldiers were in the thick of a hand-to-hand fray under a rain of spears and clubs. The spear that had struck Alençon Barré would have struck Blake Shorland had he not bent backwards when he did. As it was the weapon had torn a piece of cloth from his coat.

A moment, and the wounded man was lifted to the ground. The surgeon shook his head in sad negation. Death already blanched the face of Alençon Barré. Blake Shorland looked into the misty eyes with a sadness only known to those who can gauge the love of men who suffer for each other. Four days ago this gallant young officer had taken risk for him, had saved him from injury, perhaps death; to-day the spear meant for him had stricken down this same young officer,

never to rise again. The vicarious sacrifice seemed none the less noble to Blake Shorland because it was involuntary, because according to fact it was an accident. The only point clear in his mind was, that had he not leant back, Alençon Barré would be the whole man and he the wounded one.

"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Mon ami,*" Blake Shorland said; and at that moment he could say no more. There could indeed be little more to say.

Alençon Barré looked up, agony twitching his nostrils and a dry white line on his lips. "*Mon ami!*" he said, "it is in action—that is something; it is for France, that is more to me—everything. They would not let me serve France in Paris, but I die for her in New Caledonia. I have lived six-and-twenty years. I have loved the world. Many men have been kind, and once there was a woman,—and I shall see her soon, quite soon. It is strange. The eyes will become blind, and then they will open and—ah!" The agony shook his body and his fingers closed convulsively on those of Blake Shorland. When the ghastly tremor, the demoniacal corrosions of the poisoned spear, passed he said, "So, so! It is the end. *C'est bien, C'est bien!*"

All round them the fight raged, and French soldiers were repeating English bravery in the Soudan.

"It is not against a great enemy, but it is good," said the wounded man as he heard the conquering cries of a handful of soldiers punishing five times their numbers. "You remember Prince Eugène and the assegais?"

"I remember."

"Our Houses were enemies, but we were friends, he and I. And so, and so you see, it is the same for both."

Again the teeth of the devouring poison fastened on him, and when it left him a grey pallor had settled upon the face.

Blake Shorland said to him gently, "*Mon ami,* it is the end. How do you feel about it all?"

As if in gentle protest the head moved slightly. "*C'est bien, c'est bien,*" the low voice said.

A pause, in which the cries of the wounded came through the smoke, and then the dying man, feeling the approach of another convulsion, said, "A cigarette, *mon ami.*"

Blake Shorland put a cigarette between his lips and lighted it.

"And now a little wine," the fallen soldier added.

The surgeon, who had come again for a moment, nodded and said, "It may act as an antidote to the poison."

Alençon Barré's native servant brought a tiny bottle of champagne which was intended to be drunk in celebration of the expected victory, but not in this fashion!

Blake Shorland understood. This brave young soldier of a dispossessed family wished to show no fear of pain, no lack of outward and physical courage in the approaching and final shock. He must do something that was conventional, natural, habitual, that would take his mind from the thing itself. At heart the man was right. The rest was a question of living like a strong-nerved soldier to the last. The tobacco-smoke curled feebly from his lips, and was swallowed up in the clouds of powder-smoke that circled round them. With his head on his native servant's knee he watched Blake Shorland uncork the champagne and pour the wine into the surgeon's medicine-glass. It was put in his fingers; he sipped it once and then drank it all. "Again," he said.

Again it was filled. The cigarette was smoked nearly to the end. Blake Shorland must unburden his mind of one thought, and so he said, "You took what was meant for me, my friend."

"Ah, no, no, my friend! It was the fortune, we will say the good fortune. *C'est bien!*" Then, "The wine, the wine," he said, and his fingers again clasped those of Blake Shorland tremblingly. He took the glass in his right hand and lifted it. "God guard all at home! God keep

France!" he said. He was about to place the glass to his lips, when a stray bullet struck it, and left only the stem in his hand. He fell back, his breath quick and vanishing, his eyes closing, and a sad, faint smile upon his lips: "It is always the same with France," he said; "always the same." And then a slight tremor seized him, and he was gone.

V.

THE French had bought their victory dear with the death of Alençon Barré, their favourite officer. When they turned their backs upon a quelled insurrection, there was a gap that not even French buoyancy could fill. On the morning of the twenty-fifth they neared Noumea. Blake Shorland thought of all that day meant to Luke Glasham and Clare Hazard. He was helpless to alter the course of events, to stay a painful possibility.

"You can never trust a woman of Gabrielle's stamp," he said to himself, as they rode along through valleys of ferns, grenadillas, and limes. "They have no base-line of duty; they either rend themselves or rend others, but rend they must, hearts and not garments. Henri Durien knows, and she knows, and Alençon Barré knew, poor boy! but what he knew is buried with him back there under the palms. Glasham and Clare are to be married to-morrow—God help them! I had forgotten that. And I can see them in their home, he standing by the fireplace in his old way—it's winter there!—and looking down at Clare; and on the other side of the fireplace sits the sister of the Woman in the Morgue, waiting for the happiest moment in the lives of these two before her. And when it comes, as she did with the portrait, as she did with him before, she will set her foot upon his face and then on Clare's; only neither Luke nor Clare will live again after that crucifixion. It must be a death in life, it will. . . . Hollo! what's that?—a messenger riding hard

to meet us! Smoke in the direction of Noumea and sound of firing! What's that, doctor? Convicts revolted, made a break at the prison and on the way to the quarries at the same moment! Of course,—seized the time when the post was weakest, helped by ticket-of-leave men and led by Henri Durien, Gaspard, and Gabrielle Rouget. Gabrielle Rouget, eh! And this is the twenty-fifth! Yes, I will take Barré's horse, captain, thank you; it is fresher than mine. Away we go! Egad, they're at it, doctor. Hear the rifles!"

Answering to the leader's cry of "Forward, forward, my men!" the detachment dash into the streets of this little Paris, which, after the fashion of its far-away mother, is dipping its hands in Revolution. Outcast and criminal France is arrayed against military France once more. A handful of guards in the prison at Ile Nou are bravely holding in check a ruthless mob of convicts; and a crowd of convicts in the street are holding in check a determined military force. Part of the newly-arrived reinforcements go to Ile Nou, part move towards the barricade. Blake Shorland goes to the barricade. He feels that here he shall see a development of Luke Glasham's story.

The convicts have the Café Voisin in their rear. As the reinforcements join the besieging party a cheer rises, and a sally is made upon the barricade. It is a hail of fire meeting a slighter rain of fire—a cry of coming victory cutting through a sullen roar of despair. The square in which the convicts are massed is a trench of blood and bodies; but they fight on. There is but one hope,—to break out, to meet the soldiers hand to hand and fight for passage to the friendly jungle and to the sea, where afloat they may trust to that Providence that appears to help even the wicked sometimes. As Blake Shorland looks upon the scene and sketches it rapidly, missiles and bullets flying round him the while, he thinks of Alençon Barré's words:

"It is always the same with France, always the same."

The fight grows fiercer, the soldiers press nearer. And now one clear voice is heard above the din, "Forward, forward, my children!" and some one springs upon the outer barricade. It is the plotter of the revolt, the leader, the manager of the "Underground Railway," the beloved of the convicts—Gabrielle Rouget! The sunlight glorifies her streaming hair and vivid dress—vivid with the blood of the fallen. Her arms, her shoulders, her feet are bare; all that she could spare from her body had gone to bind the wounds of her desperate comrades. In her hands she holds a carbine. As she stands for an instant unmoving, the firing, as if by magic, ceases. She raises a hand. "We will have the guillotine in Paris," she said; "but not the hell of exile here." And then Henri Durien, the convict, springs up beside her; the man for whom she had made a life's sacrifice—for whom she had come to *this*. His head is bandaged and clotted with blood; his eyes blaze with that ferocity that comes to desperate animals at bay. Close after him crowd the handful of his frenzied compatriots in crime, hardened to all endurance physically by discipline and labour; and yet there were faces among them that seemed not yet hardened to all atrocity morally; faces of young men with one crime blighting their lives, with one sin driving them to final ignominy.

They stand there for the poise of a panther's leap, and then a rifle-crack is heard, and Henri Durien falls at the feet of Gabrielle Rouget. The wave on the barricade quivers, and then Gabrielle's voice is heard crying, "Avenge him! Free yourselves, my children! It is better than prison!" And the wave falls in red turmoil on the breakers. And still Gabrielle stood alone above the body of Henri Durien; but the carbine was fallen from her hands. She stood as one

awaiting death, her eyes upon the unmoving form at her feet. The soldiers watched her, but no one fired. Blake Shorland sketched her rapidly as she stood there. He did it mechanically. The dramatic side of his nature was working without mental direction, for he was thinking with a new sense of horror that this woman was the wife of his friend. Her face was white and the mouth was agonised; but in the eyes there was a wild triumph. She wanted death now; but these French soldiers had not the heart to kill her. When she saw that, she leaned and thrust a hand into the bleeding bosom of Henri Durien, and holding it aloft cried, "For this blood men must die." Then again stooping she seized the carbine and levelled it at the officer in command. But before she pulled the trigger some one fired, and she fell across the body of her lover. A moment after Blake Shorland stood beside her. She was shot through the lungs. She drew herself up and touched the brow of the dead convict with her lips.

Blake Shorland stooped over her. "Gabrielle, Gabrielle!" he said.

"Yes, yes, I know,—I saw you. This is the twenty-fifth. He will be married to-morrow,—Luke. I owed it to him to die; I owed it to Henri to die this way."

She drew the scarred portrait of Luke Glasham from her bosom and gave it to Blake Shorland.

"It was his eyes that made me," she said; "they were always good. They haunted me so. Well, it is all done. I am sorry, ah! . . . Never tell him of this. . . . I go away—away—with Henri."

She closed her eyes and was still for a moment; so still that he thought her dead. But she looked up at him again and said feebly and with her last breath, "I *am*—the Woman in the Morgue—now—always!"

EXTRACTS FROM SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF
CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

I.

"AFTER all, depend upon it, it is better to be worn out with work in a thronged community, than to perish of inaction in a stagnant solitude; take this truth into consideration whenever you get tired of work and bustle." So wrote Charlotte Brontë to a busy friend in London from the silence and solitude of her moorland home. Reading between the lines it is easy to realise how overwhelming to her fettered soul must have been that sense of stagnation of which she speaks; and how at times her spirit, chafing at the isolation to which it was doomed, must have craved to spread its wings, and take a part in that world which was to her but a name.

This extract is to be found in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, and is taken from a series of letters written to the same friend, Mr. W. Smith Williams—letters which give evidence of her necessity for feeling herself in touch with a sympathetic mind, such as, alas! she was little likely to meet with in the Yorkshire wilds of long ago. "I can give you but a faint idea of the pleasure your letters afford me; they seem to introduce light and life to the torpid retirement where we lie like dormice. I think if you knew *how* pleased I am to get a long letter from you, you would laugh at me."

It is pathetic to notice how, as time goes on, her strong sense of duty helps her to modify her unsatisfied longings for intercourse with congenial natures, and even to school and subdue her tastes into something like acquiescence in a destiny which she believes to be ordained for her. In this, as in all the troubles and anxieties of her clouded lot, her cheerful and uncomplaining resignation to the inevitable is

a marked characteristic of her nature. "For society," she writes later on, "long seclusion has in a great measure unfitted me. I doubt whether I should now enjoy it if I had it. Sometimes I think I should, and I thirst for it; but at other times I doubt my capability of pleasing or deriving pleasure. The prisoner in solitary confinement, the toad in the block of marble, all in time shape themselves to their lot. And let me be content with seclusion; it has its advantages. In general, indeed, I am tranquil; it is only now and then that a struggle disturbs me—that I wish for a wider world than Haworth; when it is past, reason tells me how unfit I am for anything very different."

Underlying these quiet words, does not the same unsatisfied note ring out clearly and distinctly to the sensitive ear? At the time the above was written Charlotte was indeed alone; her sisters, whose companionship and sympathy went so far towards peopling her little world, had been taken from her, and the forlorn heart left to mourn their loss must have been desolate indeed. But the crowded thoroughfare and the lone and solitary footpath lead alike to one end—to the inevitable moment when busy hands are folded and the active brain must perforce be still. Many years have passed since the above was penned; both writer and recipient have long ceased to strive and struggle, and Death's unsparing hand has remorselessly thinned the ranks of their contemporaries.

It is the good fortune of the writer of the present paper to possess a large number of these letters exchanged from time to time between the distant friends; letters which are in them-

selves a mine of wealth and beauty, and which are also interesting from their free and independent comment upon the writers and topics of the day. Mrs. Gaskell was aware of the existence of these letters, and when engaged in preparing the admirable biography of her friend, she begged a few for insertion; but at that time it was not thought desirable to allow such as were of an intimate and confidential nature to appear in print. A scrupulous regard for the feelings of many people at that time living obliged Mr. Williams to refuse them, and it is evident from remarks addressed to him by Mrs. Gaskell on this subject in some letters now lying before me, that she thoroughly appreciated his motives in withholding them. Many of these honourable scruples having been now removed, some extracts from this correspondence are here for the first time given in print. In selecting them their chronological order has not been studied, and some of her remarks upon Thackeray and others have been chosen for the present paper. It must not be forgotten that her views were entirely self-formed, and not in any sense acquired from the conventional criticism of the day, which doubtless has, and should have, its weight in fashioning individual opinion. I mean, taking her comments on Thackeray as an example, that while it is impossible to avoid the recognition of a luminary when basking in the full light and heat of its meridian, it requires a keener sense to predict its power from indications of glory in an eastern sky. "I wonder what the world thinks of him," she says in the letter quoted below, and the remark indicates her entire isolation from contemporary criticism and comment.

The first letter in which she mentions Thackeray is dated Dec. 11th, 1847.

I hardly ever felt delight equal to that which cheered me when I received your letter containing an extract from a note by Mr. Thackeray, in which he expressed himself gratified with the perusal of *Jane Eyre*. Mr. Thackeray is a keen, ruthless

satirist. I had never perused his writings but with feelings of blended admiration and indignation. Critics, it appears to me, do not know what an intellectual bo-constrictor he is—they call him "humorous," "brilliant"; his is a most scalping humour, a most deadly brilliancy—he does not play with his prey, he coils round it and crushes it in his rings. He seems terribly in earnest in his war against the follies and the falsehood of the world. I wonder what the world thinks of him. I should think the faults of such a man would be distrust of anything good in human nature; galling suspicion of bad motives lurking behind good actions. Are these his failings? They are, at any rate, the failings of his written sentiments, for he cannot find in his heart to represent either man or woman as at once good and wise. Does he not too much confound benevolence with weakness, and wisdom with mere craft?

Her own estimate of human nature was not at all times a high one. Ill-health, solitude, and sorrow doubtless had their share in inducing at times an abnormally morbid frame of mind which in happier moments was foreign to her; and some such mood must have been in the ascendant when she wrote the following words. The letter is dated during the period immediately following the death of her ill-fated brother, and the inference is obvious.

I thank you for your last truly friendly letter, and for the number of *Blackwood* which accompanied it; both arrived at a time when a relapse of illness had depressed me much; both did me good, especially the letter. I have only one fault to find with your expressions of friendship; they make me ashamed, because they seem to imply that you think better of me than I merit. I believe you are prone to think too highly of your fellow creatures in general; to see too exclusively the good points of those for whom you have a regard. Disappointment must be the inevitable result of this habit. Believe all men and all women, too, to be dust and ashes, a spark of the Divinity now and then kindling in the dull heap—that is all. You say that men of genius may have egregious faults, but they cannot descend to brutality or meanness. Would that the case were so! Would that in-

telleet could preserve from low vice, but alas! it cannot. There is something divine in the thought that genius preserves from degradation, were it but true; but Savage tells us it was not true for him; Sheridan confirms the avowal, and Byron seals it with terrible proof! Is there a human being, you ask, so depraved that an act of kindness will not touch? There are hundreds of human beings who trample on kindness, and mock at words of affection. I know this, though I have seen but little of the world. I suppose I have something harsher in my nature than you have; something which every now and then tells me dreary secrets about my race, and I cannot believe the voice of the optimist, charm he never so wisely. As to the great, good, magnanimous acts which have been performed by some men, trace them up to motives, and then estimate their value; a few would gain, many lose by this test. The study of motives is a strange one; not to be pursued too far by one fallible human being in reference to his fellows. Do not condemn me as uncharitable. I know that while there are many good, sincere, gentle people in the world, with whom kindness is all-powerful, there are also not a few who must often have turned benefits into weapons wherewith to wound their benefactors.

It looks as though, after all, Miss Brontë's and Mr. Thackeray's views with regard to mankind in general were not always at variance. "He judged human nature so meanly," says the latter of Sir Robert Walpole, "that one is ashamed to have to own that he was right."

The next mention of Thackeray I find in the letters arises from a request or suggestion from Mr. Williams, who knew her to be possessed of considerable artistic talent, that she should herself illustrate the second edition of *Jane Eyre*.

It is not enough to have the artist's eye [she writes], one must also have the artist's hand to turn the first gift to practical account. I have in my day wasted a certain quantity of Bristol board and drawing paper; but when I examine the contents of my portfolio now, it seems as if during the years it has been lying closed some fairy had changed what I once thought sterling coin into dry leaves, and I feel much inclined to consign the whole col-

lection of drawings to the fire; I see they have no value. If, then, *Jane Eyre* is to be illustrated it must be by some other hand than that of its author; but I hope no one will be at the trouble to make portraits of my characters. Bulwer and Byron heroes and heroines are very well—they are all of them handsome; but my personages are mostly unattractive in look, and therefore ill-adapted to figure as ideal portraits. At the best I have always thought such representations futile. You will not easily find a second Thackeray. How he can render with a few black lines and dots shades of expression so fine, so real—traits of character so minute, so subtle, so difficult to seize and fix, I cannot tell; I can only wonder and admire. Thackeray may not be a painter, but he is a wizard of a draughtsman; touched by his pencil, paper lives. All is true in Thackeray; if Truth were again a goddess Thackeray should be her high priest. The more I read of his works the more certain I am that he stands alone; alone in his sagacity, alone in his truth, alone in his feeling (his feeling, though he makes no noise about it, is about the most genuine that ever lived in a printed page), alone in his power, alone in his simplicity, alone in his self-control. Thackeray is a Titan, so strong that he can afford to perform with calm the most Herculean feats; there is the charm and majesty of repose in his greatest efforts. *He* borrows nothing from fever; *his* is never the energy of delirium; his energy is sane energy, deliberate energy, thoughtful energy. The last number of *Vanity Fair* proves this peculiarly. Forceful, exciting in its force, still more impressive than exciting; carrying on the interest of the narrative in a flow deep, full, resistless, it is still quiet—as quiet as reflection, as quiet as memory; and to me there are parts of it which sound as solemn as an oracle. Thackeray is never borne away by his own ardour, he has it under control; his genius obeys him—it is his servant, and works no fantastic changes at its own wild will; it must still achieve the task which reason and sense assign it, and none other. Thackeray is unique. I can say no more. I will say no less.

14th August, 1848.

I have already told you, I believe, that I regard Thackeray as the first of modern masters. I study him with reverence. He, I see, keeps the mermaid's tail below water, and only hints at the dead men's bones and noxious slime amidst which it wrigs-

gles ; but his hint is more vivid than other men's elaborate explanations, and never is his satire whetted to so keen an edge as when with quiet mocking irony he modestly recommends to the approbation of the public his own exemplary discretion and forbearance. The world begins to know Thackeray better than it did two years, or even a year ago, but as yet it only half knows him. His mind seems to me a fabric as simple and unpretending as it is deep-founded and enduring. There is no meretricious ornament to attract or fix a superficial glance ; his great distinction of the genuine is one that can only be fully appreciated with time. There is something—a sort of “still-profound”—revealed in the concluding part of *Vanity Fair* which the discernment of one generation will not suffice to fathom. A hundred years hence, if he only lives to do justice to himself, he will be better known than he is now ; a hundred years hence some thoughtful critic, standing and looking down on the deep waters, will see shining through them the pearl without price of a purely original mind—such a mind as the Bulwers, &c., his contemporaries, have *not* ; not acquirements gained from study, but the thing that came into the world with him—his inherent genius—the thing that made him.

10th January, 1850.

Thackeray's Christmas book at once grieved and pleased me. I have come to the conclusion that when he writes Mephistopheles stands on his right hand and Raphael on his left ; the great doubter and sneerer usually guides the pen—the angel, noble and gentle, interlines letters of light here and there. Alas ! Thackeray ! I wish your strong wings would lift you oftener above the smoke of cities into the purer region nearer heaven.

The final extract which I shall give on this subject is interesting because it may possibly owe its origin to the effects of that memorable evening in Young Street, of which Mrs. Ritchie so charmingly tells us in a recent number of this magazine. She speaks of the appearance of Miss Brontë in her father's house on an occasion which had apparently been consecrated and set apart to do her honour ; and she hints at the expectations which were formed—and alas ! disappointed—with regard to the words of wisdom which would inevitably drop from the

lips of the honoured guest, to the edification of the distinguished company assembled to meet her. Mr. Andrew Lang in the April number of *Longman's Magazine*, refers to the same article, and in allusion to the absence of entertaining talk inquires :—“How did Miss Brontë manage it ? By shyness, by superiority, or by a mixture of unsocial qualities ? . . . Miss Brontë was perhaps shy and silent, while people felt the existence of criticism in her shyness—of criticism and perhaps of disapproval.”

Poor Miss Brontë ! It is only fair to let her speak for herself ; for although the letter from which I quote may or may not refer to the occasion in question, it certainly throws some light upon the miserable condition of paralysed nervousness (far removed, I should imagine, from any spirit of censoriousness), which, hidden under the mask of an extremely quiet and undemonstrative exterior, was undoubtedly Miss Brontë's characteristic. Her occasional remarks to the governess would be the result not of condescension but of her intense and often expressed sympathy with the class, added to the relief she must have experienced at being able, at intervals, to screw up courage to address anybody at all. To employ her own simile “the toad had” (at all events, to outward appearance) in a measure “accommodated itself to the block of marble.”

Brief as my visit to London was it must for me be memorable. I sometimes fancied myself in a dream. I could scarcely credit the reality of what passed. For instance, when I walked into the room, and put my hand into Miss Martineau's, the action of saluting her and the fact of her presence seemed visionary. Again, when Mr. Thackeray was announced and I saw him enter, looked up at his tall figure and heard his voice, the whole incident was truly dream-like. I was only certain it was true because I became miserably destitute of self-possession. *Amour propre* suffers terribly under such circumstances. Woe to him who thinks of himself in the presence of intellectual greatness ! Had

I not been obliged to speak, I could have managed well ; but it behoved me to answer when addressed, and the effort was torture—I spoke stupidly.

It must have been before this time that her respect and admiration for Thackeray found vent in the dedication to him of the second edition of *Jane Eyre*, for in telling Mr. Williams of her intention of so dedicating the book, she writes :—"I know nothing whatever of Mr. Thackeray : he exists for me only as an author ; of all regarding his personality, station, connections and private history, I am totally in the dark." The tone of a part of the letter from which these words are taken suggests a faint apprehension that such an intention coming from a complete stranger, might not altogether find favour in the eyes of her hero. "I need not tell you," she writes, "that when I saw Mr. Thackeray's letter enclosed under your cover the sight made me very happy. Yet it was some time before I dared open it, lest my pleasure in receiving it should be mixed with pain on learning its contents, lest, in short, the dedication should have been in some way unacceptable to him."

The result, however, does not appear to have justified any such misgiving on her part, and the compliment would seem to have been duly appreciated in the quarter to which it was directed. In the depths of a certain treasure-box which contains many another precious relic beside these letters, I find the following. It is undated, but from its tenor it seems reasonable to suppose that it has reference to this matter of the dedication.

13 *Young Street,*
Kensington.

MY DEAR MR. WILLIAMS,

I am quite vexed that by some blundering of mine I should have delayed answering Currer Bell's enormous compliment so long. I didn't know what to say in reply ; it quite flustered and upset me. Is it true, I wonder ? I'm— But a truce to egotism. Thank you for your

kindness in sending me the volumes, and (indirectly) for the greatest compliment I have ever received in my life.

Faithfully yours,
W. M. THACKERAY.

It speaks well for the retiring and modest disposition of the authoress that the achievement of literary success had so little deleterious effect upon her. Her intense desire to remain unknown, and her genuine vexation when evidences on all sides met her ear that such concealment of her identity was becoming impossible, attest to the fact that personal popularity was not what she aimed at. She could not remain in ignorance of the power that she wielded. To assume unconsciousness of those gifts which were her birth-right would have been an affectation of which her candid nature would have been incapable ; but her manner of alluding to herself and her powers is sometimes touching in its noble simplicity. In her references to other writers, also, one is struck by the entire self-abnegation with which she seats herself at the feet of those from whom she believes she can derive profit and instruction.

The letter you forwarded to me this morning (she writes), was from Mrs. Gaskell, authoress of *Mary Barton*. She said I was not to answer it, but I cannot help doing so. Her note brought the tears to my eyes. She is a good, she is a great woman ; proud am I that I can touch a chord of sympathy in souls so noble.

Then follows, after some reference to Harriet Martineau—

Both these ladies are above me—certainly far my superiors in attainment and experience. I think I could look up to them if I knew them. My resolution of seclusion withholds me from communicating further with them at present, but I now know how they are inclined to me. I know how my writings have affected their wise and pure minds. The knowledge is present support, and perhaps may be future armour.

Later on we find her resolutions of seclusion beginning to waver under

the pressure of Miss Martineau's warmly expressed wish that she should visit her at Ambleside. "I like the idea," writes Charlotte; "whether I can realise it or not, it is pleasant to have it in prospect." Apart from her strong dislike to notoriety many considerations weighed with her in contemplating the possibility of an absence from home. "Remember," she replies to Mr. Williams's repeatedly urged remonstrance that she needed more change and variety than she is willing to accord to herself, "remember that Currer Bell is a country housewife, and has sundry little matters connected with the needle and the kitchen to attend to, which take up half his day."

Finally, however, the visit to Ambleside was achieved to her great satisfaction. The impressions resulting from it shall be given in her own words.

I trust to have derived benefit from my visit to Miss Martineau; a visit more interesting I certainly never paid. If self-sustaining strength can be acquired from example, I ought to have got good. But my nature is not hers; I could not make it so, though I were to submit it seventy times seven to the furnace of affliction, and discipline it for an age under the hammer and anvil of toil and self-sacrifice. Perhaps if I were like her I should not admire her so much as I do. She is somewhat absolute, though quite unconsciously so; but she is likewise kind, with an affection at once abrupt and constant, whose sincerity you cannot doubt. It was delightful to sit near her in the evenings and hear her converse—myself mute. She speaks with what seems to me a wonderful fluency and eloquence. Her animal spirits are as unflagging as her intellectual powers. I was glad to find her health excellent; I believe neither solitude nor loss of friends would break her down. I saw some faults in her, but somehow I liked them for the sake of her good points. It gave me no pain to feel insignificant mentally and corporeally in comparison with her.

This visit to Harriet Martineau must have given her many pleasant themes for reflection. It is so seldom we find her allowing herself similar indul-

gences in a life colourless no doubt, but rendered endurable by the clear and unfaltering sense of duty which was the mainspring of her conduct. With such sense of duty she never tampered, nor were pleasure, fame or profit allowed to interfere with it. It was in adherence to this principle that she denied herself the delight of writing when the petty calls of every-day life claimed her thoughts and energies. The following letter was written at a time when anxiety on account of her father's eyesight, added to her usual household duties, induced her to devote herself to his comfort, as an object of paramount importance, and was in response to the urgent entreaty of her publishers for more work from her pen. While admitting her longing to resume the occupation which was so congenial to her, she writes:

I can make no promise as to when another will be ready; neither my time nor my efforts are my own. That absorption in my employment to which I gave myself up without fear of being wrong when I wrote *Jane Eyre* would now be alike impossible and blamable. Meantime I should say let the public forget at their ease, and let us not be nervous about it. As to the critics, if the Bells possess real merit, I do not fear impartial justice being rendered to them one day. I have a very short mental as well as physical sight in some matters, and am far less uneasy at the idea of public impatience, misconstruction, censure, &c., than I am at the thought of the anxiety of those two or three friends in Cornhill, to whom I owe much kindness, and whose expectations I would earnestly wish not to disappoint. If they can make up their minds to wait tranquilly and put some confidence in my good will, if not in my power to get on as well as may be, I shall not repine. But I verily believe that the "nobler sex" find it more difficult to wait, to plod, to work out their destiny inch by inch than their sisters do. They are always for walking so fast, and taking such long steps one cannot keep up with them. One should never tell a gentleman that one has commenced a task till it is nearly achieved. Currer Bell, even if he had no let or hindrance, and if his path were quite smooth could never march with the tread of a Scott, a Bulwer,

a Thackeray, or a Dickens. I want you clearly to understand this. I have always wished to guard you against exaggerated anticipations. Calculate low when you calculate on me.

With one more letter in which she expresses some opinions upon Southey and Jane Austen I will bring my paper to a conclusion. After criticism on various writers whose works she has been reading, she says.

The perusal of Southey's *Life* has lately afforded me much pleasure. Some people assert that genius is inconsistent with domestic happiness, and yet Southey was happy at home, and made his home happy; he not only loved his wife and children *though* he was a poet, but he loved them the better *because* he was a poet. He seems to have been without taint of worldliness; London with its pomps and vanities, learned coteries with their dry pedantry, rather scared than attracted him. He found his prime glory in his genius, and his chief felicity in home affections. I like Southey. I have likewise read one of Miss Austen's works—*Emma*—read it with interest, and with just the degree of admiration that Miss Austen herself would have thought sensible and suitable. Anything like warmth or enthusiasm, anything energetic, poignant, or heartfelt, is utterly out of place in commending these works. All such demonstration the authoress would have scorned as *outré* and extravagant. She does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well; there is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy in the painting. She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing pro-

found. The passions are perfectly unknown to her—she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood; even to the feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition; too frequent converse with them would ruffle the smooth elegance of her progress. Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands, and feet. What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study; but what throbs fast and full though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life, and the sentient target of death—*this* Miss Austen ignores. She no more with her mind's eye beholds the heart of her race than each man, with bodily vision, sees the heart in his heaving breast. Jane Austen was a complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete and rather insensible (*not senseless*) woman. If this is heresy I cannot help it. If I said it to some people (Lewes, for instance) they would directly accuse me of advocating exaggerated heroics; but I am not afraid of your falling into any such error.

It is not my intention to comment on the foregoing letters or to dwell on the talent and ability of their composer. So much has been done by able and loving hands to keep her memory green that further attempt at praise or criticism is unnecessary, and would indeed bear too much resemblance to the superfluous process of "refining a violet" to which Charles Lamb so characteristically objects.

E. BAUMER WILLIAMS.

FREDERICK WALKER.

THE fine display of water-colour drawings, illustrating the progress of the art in England, which formed a special feature of the winter's exhibition at Burlington House, has recalled the name of Frederick Walker, a master whose influence on English landscape-painting has been out of all proportion to the brief span of life which he enjoyed. Many and famous as were the works assembled there, there were few so full of charm as the group of pictures which bore his name, perhaps none which appealed with the same power and eloquence to the men and women of the present time. In these days of stress and hurry when reputations are made and marred so quickly, and one man hurries after another across the little stage, it is well to stand still sometimes and recall the names of these already half-forgotten artists who have died in the morning of their days and in the first flush of their triumph.

It was in 1875 that Frederick Walker died, the same year as Jean François Millet, the great Barbison painter, whose art is at once so strikingly like and yet so strangely unlike that of the young English master. Thirty-five years of life, barely fifteen of production,—this was the scanty measure that fate allowed to this child of genius, who looked on the world with eyes so full of wonder and freshness and a spirit so keenly touched by the mingled beauty and pathos of its joy and its despair. The story of his life is soon told. He was born May 24th, 1840, in London. A strange fate, we are inclined to say, for a painter who above all others loved the spring-time and revelled with passionate delight in the splendour of the grass and the glory of the flower. We like to think of the boy Giotto

tending his sheep on the pleasant slopes of Val Mugello, of Titian in his mountain-home among the Alps of Cadore, of the young Millet looking out from his Normandy meadows across the boundless expanse of the northern seas. And Frederick Walker ought by right to have been born in some woodland glade on the banks of a bright river where summer blossoms hang over sunny waters. But the high gods had willed otherwise, and there is some consolation in the thought that it is still possible for men of this stamp to grow up in the dull gray London streets, in the fog and smoke of Babylon the Mighty. It seems indeed, at times, as if the very dreariness and hopelessness of circumstances, the very absence of beauty and lack of all that could satisfy the mind's needs, did but serve to stimulate its hunger and strengthen its aspirations after a higher and a fuller life. Frederick Walker was born in Marylebone, and went to school in Camden Town. No beginnings could have been more prosaic, no conditions seemed more fatal to the unfolding buds of genius. Yet not even these unpromising surroundings could quench the divine fire which glowed in the boy's breast. He was always drawing, and his talent soon attracted his master's attention at the North London Collegiate School where he was educated. At the age of sixteen he entered an architect's office, but soon found that this profession did not suit the bent of his genius. Then he joined some evening art-classes under Mr. Leigh in Newman Street, and became a student of the Royal Academy in 1858. But the true school in which Frederick Walker received his art-training was the Elgin Room of the British Museum. From his earliest

boyhood the marbles of the Parthenon were his favourite study. The perfect forms of these immortal works were to him a source of never-failing delight. To them, he often said in after years, he owed whatever was best in his art. And to the end of his life he kept casts of the famous marbles in the studio where he worked, just as Millet hung them before him in the wooden room of the garden at Barbison.

Walker's clever drawing soon brought him into notice. He was employed on designs for wood-engraving, and worked for two years under Mr. Whymper. But he soon began to receive commissions on his own account, and in 1860 his first engraving appeared in *Once a Week*, in the same number as a plate by the painter who was then known as Mr. Millais. The grace and refinement of his designs caught the eye of Thackeray, and in the following year he was engaged to illustrate the *Adventures of Philip*, then appearing in the Cornhill Magazine. At first Thackeray supplied the young draughtsman with rough sketches for his subjects, but before long he was so well pleased with Walker's rendering of his ideas as to leave the whole of the task to him. The two men understood each other thoroughly, and the young painter never forgot the days he spent sitting at Thackeray's bedside listening with rapt attention to the next chapter of the story as it flowed from the author's lips. Seldom indeed has periodical literature profited by so rare a combination. But the fortunate union was soon dissolved, and only a few chapters of *Denis Duval* had appeared with Walker's illustrations when the story stopped abruptly,—cut short by the death of Thackeray.

Walker was now fairly started on his career. In 1864 he became an associate of the Old Water Colour Society, and two years later he was elected a full member. Most of the charming drawings we saw last winter at Burlington House were first seen at the Society's annual exhibitions.

The subjects are simple enough ; a

fishmonger's shop where a fair-haired girl bargains with the seller before a stall laden with fish, and a row of flower-pots stand on the shelf above ; an old-fashioned garden where the may and lilac are in bloom, and purple-leaved iris and scarlet tulips grow in rich profusion under the red brick wall, and the farmer's daughter in her spotted print gown stands knitting on the grass plot, or else an aged labourer picking a posy of bright-hued flowers for some children under the blossoming fruit-trees. Sometimes we have a domestic incident, a group of village children at their lessons, a little girl taken by her mother to pay a visit to the inmates of an orphanage, dainty forms in green frocks and muslin frills which were invented before the days of Mr. Allingham and Miss Greenaway. The puzzled look of surprise and wonderment we so often meet on child-faces is admirably given ; no one knew better how to render the swift emotions, the short-lived pleasures and cares, the smiles and tears of children's lives. But whatever the subject it is always treated with the same artistic feeling. There is never anything ugly in form or crude in tone to be found in Walker's painting. The colour is always exquisite, the grouping always graceful, if he only shows us a handful of mushrooms and strawberry flowers growing at the foot of a mossy trunk.

"Composition," the painter said once, and it is one of the very few sayings of his which have been recorded, "composition is the art of preserving the accidental look." And that happy phrase exactly describes the spontaneous grace and native charm of these little pictures. They are all of them things of beauty and therefore they remain a joy for ever. Their loveliness increases the longer we look at them, and their value is not to be reckoned by their size or subject.

But it is above all as a painter of English scenery that Walker's fame will endure. It was the natural beauty of wood and meadow, of garden

and river, which most of all appealed to him. The radiance of the summer day filled him with rapture; the fiery glories of the sunset sky, the solemn stillness of the twilight had for him a great and wondrous meaning. The buttercups and daisies in the long grass, the sighing of the wind in the autumn trees, the sweet sadness and stillness of the gray winter days, each brought him a new message. "The greatest delight I know," he once said to a friend, "is to see the white hawthorn in blossom against a blue sky and to try and paint it." This freshness of vision, this ever new sense of joy and wonder in the changing seasons, is reflected in every picture which Walker painted. The passion and poetry of his own soul have passed into his work and stir our hearts with the same emotion. "Spirits are not finely touched, but to fine issues." And so he speaks to us in a thousand different ways. It is the very voice of spring which breathes in that woodland scene where the happy children are picking primroses, while the trees are still bare and the first yellow catkins hang upon the twigs: the glory of June lives in that hawthorn tree, white with snowy bloom on the banks of the stream where the swallow dips in the transparent waters; and the ripe fulness of autumn stirs the blood in the ruddy-cheeked maidens who pluck the apples from the fruit-laden boughs under the old red wall.

These were the subjects he painted in many a sunny meadow by many a flowery river-side of rural England, in the fair west country, in Devonshire lanes and Somersetshire combs, or else in our suburban districts of Hampstead and Old Kensington. But his favourite hunting-grounds were the banks of the Thames. To most of us this river which flows past the spires of Oxford and through the Eton playing-fields, by the field of Runnymede and under the castled steep of Windsor, has a charm unlike all other rivers in the world. There

are no meadows so fair, no woods so green as those beside its waters. And for Frederick Walker, the most English of landscape-painters, this thoroughly English scenery was rich in endless beauties. He was never tired of watching the sun shine in the rippling waters, never weary of listening to the music of the rushing stream, or of painting the flowers and trees along its banks. Cookham and its immediate neighbourhood were his chosen haunts. There is not a turn of the river here, not a picturesque nook or meadow, which he has not at one time, or other tried to sketch; the village street itself, the low red houses with their old-fashioned gardens and tall white lilies, Marlow ferry with the boy rowing across the river and the rows of willows in front of the picturesque old roofs. Here the painter spent many happy summers, and here when the end came he was glad to sleep in the quiet churchyard under the old grey tower on the banks of his shining river.

It has been said by some critics that Walker worked too much on what used to be called pre-Raphaelite lines, and made the mistake of trying to represent Nature after too minute a fashion. It is true that each bit of natural fact, each sunny bank or flowery bed, was in his eyes worth painting from pure delight in its beauty; but he has a wonderful way of making a picture out of the scantiest material, and at the same time a power of transforming the scene, of binding all its separate elements together and forming them into one harmonious whole. This he does by the power of some prevailing thought, some strong undercurrent of deep emotion. A sweet young face looks out on us from the midst of a bower of blossom, a face which is sad for all its loveliness; and the yearning eyes and wistful lips supply the key of the picture and tell us all its meaning. In his well-known picture of the Wayfarers, an old man and a lad wending their way under the darkening sky at the close of

a brief autumn day, the impression of loneliness and weariness is heightened by the windy clouds which are sweeping past, and the bare trees which lift their gaunt arms against the pale sky. Nature, the great consoler, shares the toil and sorrow of struggling humanity, and enfolds him with her presence and her might.

His first oil-painting, the *Lost Path*, a mother and child lost in the snow on a winter's night, was exhibited at the Royal Academy as early as 1863. But after that he was chiefly engaged on smaller works, and it was not till 1867 that his great triumphs began. That year he painted his large picture of the *Bathers*, a work revealing the finest qualities of his genius and at the same time remarkable for a high degree of technical perfection. The subject was a favourite one with him, and in a smaller canvas called *Summer* he had already tried to express that delicious sense of the first plunge in the bright cool waters under the thick shade of the August foliage. Now he developed his first idea on a larger scale and in a nobler fashion. His young bathers at play on the shore of the sunny Thames are as free and joyous in their movements, as full of strength and gladness as any Greek children of old; and at their feet the clear green river flows smoothly between its banks in all the charm of their midsummer loveliness. In most of this painter's great pictures there is a note of sadness and regret, a lingering look backward over the vanishing past, the shadow, as it were, of the coming end. But here there is none of this mournful foreboding. His mood is as gay, as brimful of health and mirth as the youngest amongst us. For once death and sorrow are put away from his thoughts, and he gives himself up unreservedly to the rapture of living when life and youth are at their best. The admiration excited by this fine painting on its last appearance in public at the sale of Mr. Graham's pictures five years ago must still be fresh in the minds of

our readers, who may remember that it was then sold for the large price of 2,625 guineas. The *Bathers* was followed in 1868 by the *Vagrants*, that admirably-painted picture of gipsies lighting their fire on the open moorland which was bought at the same sale by the Trustees of the National Gallery and now adorns one of the rooms reserved for the British School in Trafalgar Square. In 1869 came the *Old Gate*, one of the best-known and most pathetic of Walker's pictures. The subject is familiar to us all. A widow lady in the blackness of her weeds comes out in the stillness of the autumn evening from the old gate between the stone pillars of the ancient manor-house. At the sight of her mourning garb and sad face the children at play on the steps break off their games, and the young labourer on his way home from work lays down his pipe, moved to respectful sympathy with the grief they cannot heal. The most solemn meanings are gathered up in this simple scene,—the sharp contrasts of life and death, of youth and age, which continually force themselves upon us in this world where joy and sorrow are so strangely woven together. Once more we are reminded of the old truth, that "men must work and women must weep," and of the strong ties which under all seeming differences still knit young and old, rich and poor together in one common bond of brotherhood.

The next year witnessed the culminating effort of Walker's genius, and the Royal Academy of 1870, became memorable by the exhibition of his great work the *Plough*.

Three years before, in the summer of 1867, he had visited the Paris Exhibition, where one of his own engravings, *Philip in Church*, had won a first-class medal. There he had seen the chief of Millet's great pictures, the *Angelus*, the *Sower*, the *Gleaners*, the *Young Shepherdess*, and others which have now acquired world-wide renown. The sight of these works naturally made

a great impression upon the young Englishman, whose sympathy with the beauty of the universe was so keen, and who had himself been fired by the same ideal as the Norman painter. He, too, felt the infinite glories of the drama in which man has to play his part and saw the heroic side of peasant labour, and with these thoughts fresh in his mind he went home to paint a picture on the same theme. It was down in the west, in a Somersetshire meadow at the foot of the Quantocks, that Walker found the scene of this famous picture which many have classed among the greatest of English landscapes. Two white horses of massive build draw the plough, which is guided by a young labourer, while another walks at their head. In the foreground tall trees spread their leafless boughs against the sky, and a stream runs under a grassy bank at their feet, while the cliff in the background is flushed with the light of a crimson sunset. The rolling clouds have caught the burning glow which lends a tragic grandeur to the scene of toil. Never had the mystery of toil, the glory of labour, been more nobly set forth. The patient horses who draw the plough, the lads who urge them on, move as if impelled by some unseen power and conscious that the night cometh when no man can work. "Man goeth forth to his labour until the evening," was the motto which the painter chose for a picture which at once took a place in art beside the *Sower* and the *Gleaners* of Jean François Millet.

In 1872 Walker exhibited his last great painting, the *Harbour of Refuge*. Here the scene is laid in the quadrangle of the Fishmongers' Almshouses at Bray near Maidenhead, and the red brick walls and ivy-grown chapel of the old hospital rise with picturesque effect against the rosy tints of the evening sky. A fair young maiden, with red-gold hair and a strangely pathetic look on her upturned face, guides the feeble steps of an aged woman towards the green lawn, where a group of pension-

ers and children are resting round a stone statue under a hawthorn tree in full blossom. Youth and age are once more brought into striking contrast, and the strong man, who mows the daisied grass with his scythe in the foreground, is there to remind us of Death, the destroying angel, whose stern hand spares neither young nor old. All these three last pictures indeed are haunted by the same mournful foreboding, the shadow of that early death which was so soon to bring Walker's life to a sudden close. His father had died young of consumption, and there were germs of the same fatal disease in the painter's constitution. Yet his appearance did not give the impression of any peculiar delicacy. He was slight and fragile in form, but wiry and active, his step was brisk, his eye keen and alert. His delicate features and rippling hair gave him a certain likeness to the portraits of John Keats, as we see him, for instance, in the pencil drawing by Hilton lately on view at the Guelph Exhibition. Walker was of a shy and sensitive nature. He shrank from criticism, and was habitually silent and reserved. If a friend visited his studio and found him at work on a picture, he would turn his easel to the wall and avoid any allusion to the subject. The effort of production was always painful to him. He would sit for hours pencil in hand, painfully trying to realise the ideal form after which he longed, and often the result would be only a few pencil strokes. The very perfection of his thought made him hard to please. Like Leonardo, his mind was haunted with a vague sense of beauty which he could not grasp; fair faces and lovely forms filled his dreams by day and by night. But Walker was not always sad; he too had his bright days, if they came but seldom. There were times when he could fling care to the winds and be as light-hearted as a boy. All outdoor life was delightful to him, whether he spent his days in the green fields and lanes of Devonshire or on the banks of his

beloved Thames. And one of the sports into which he entered with the keenest zest was that of fishing. He was never happier than, when the Academy Exhibition once opened and his picture hung, he could rush off to the Highlands and enjoy his holiday salmon fishing with his friends. The old Highland fisherman on the Spey never forgot Mr. Walker's wild delight on the day when he caught his first salmon.

In 1873 he fell ill and was ordered to winter abroad. He spent some months in Algiers, but the cold of the following spring destroyed the good of the warmer climate, and from that time his strength declined steadily. As health failed and life seemed fast slipping from his grasp he clung to all the beauty round him with the passionate love of those who feel that this world is fading from their sight. Each year the spring seemed to him more beautiful, the flowers more fair, the sunlight more radiant than before. But he could not paint as he had done. His work began to show signs of failing power, and the *Right of Way*, the last picture which he exhibited at Burlington House in 1875, did not reach the high level of his earlier works. That winter he spent chiefly in Devonshire, returning to town in time to exhibit his picture. As soon as the Academy had opened its doors, he hurried off to Scotland in the hope that his failing health would benefit by the mountain air and he would once more be able to indulge in his favourite amusement. But his days were already numbered. He grew rapidly worse, and many of his friends had not even heard of his illness when the news reached them that he was gone. He died at St. Fillan's in Perthshire, on June 5th, 1875. Those who had loved him most, and knew his wishes best, brought his body south and buried him in the churchyard of Cookham, where the blue forget-me-nots were flowering in the rushes by the waterside and the may-trees of the Cliveden woods were all in bloom. There he sleeps where

he wished to lie, within a few steps of the river, where the summer wind blows across his grave and the waters of his sunny Thames murmur her painter's last lullaby.

When he died he was engaged on a new picture which he called the *Unknown Land*. Long ago in his youth, when he worked at wood-engraving, he had designed a plate for *Once a Week* representing a barque of emigrants about to land on the shores of their new country. Now in these last days on earth the old idea came back to him and he sketched out a large picture in which the same conception was more fully developed. The barque has left the ship, and the sailors are rowing towards the distant shore. All eyes are turned in the same direction, and eager hands are stretched out towards the unknown land. One of the band has already left the boat, and has plunged into the sea to swim to shore. A great breaking of light floods the rocks with gold as the sun drops slowly into the western sea. That was the picture which stood on Frederick Walker's easel during the last week of his life, the last sketch at which he ever worked. But before the colours had been washed in the sun of his own day had set, and he had gone forth on the last journey to that undiscovered country from which there is no return.

The death of a great painter in the flower of his age and in the fulness of his powers must always be the cause of infinite regret. In Walker's case there was the added regret of what might have been. Brilliant as was the work which he had accomplished in his short life, no one could help feeling that still more brilliant possibilities had perished with him. The loss which English art sustained by his death is best measured when we consider the influence his example has had on our best landscape painters during the last fifteen years. It is true of course that he worked within a comparatively narrow circle, and that his art had its limitations. His imagina-

tion did not range, like that of the great painters we have known even in these latter days, over the whole world of romance. He never attempted a great historic picture, or tried to illustrate the legends of Arthur and the fairy tales of old. Here, close at hand, there was food for his imagination and subjects ready for his brush. The meadows, the woods, the river, they were all full of beauty and meaning. What need for him to go further afield? So he took the common scenes of everyday life and showed how, in Millet's words, the sublime is to be found in the trivial. The themes of his pictures were the simplest, and the emotions which he expressed such as are common to all humanity. But in his own sphere he has seldom been surpassed. Not Millet himself, great as he was, had so deep and genuine a passion for beauty as this young English artist. He has won a high place among the painters of the century and his name will be remembered as one of the first who showed that the modern world was capable of artistic interpretation, and that here, in the daily toil and patient labour of the working man, in the tears and laughter of the humblest lives, there was a loveliness and a pathos undreamed of, it may be, by most of us but none the less real and true. No one looking at his great landscape of

the Plough, seeing its heroic action and magnificent colour and, realising its everlasting truths, can ever say again that English peasant life in the nineteenth century is too dull and prosaic a theme for the painter.

For Walker himself this was all he knew alike of art and life. And it is among these rural scenes and haunts that his presence seems to linger now.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely.

His voice speaks to us still in all the fairest sights and sweetest sounds of nature, in the running streams, and the opening flowers, and the spring-time which he loved so well. When we walk under the old red roofs and watch the swallows skimming the crystal waters, when the daisies start up in the grass and the thorn is white with blossom, when the last rays of the sunset are pouring their brightness over hill and vale, then we think of Frederick Walker and wish him back again. To have added so largely to the joy and gladness of the world, and to live for ever in the hearts of men as the painter of youth and spring, is, after all, more than has fallen to the lot of most men.

JULIA CARTWRIGHT.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF ART.

THE play is done, and shadow lies,
 Where late the empire of an hour
 Waxed great and waned before men's eyes;
 And homeward I, with brooding thought
 Of art that bravely comes to flower,
 And soon is nought.

I dream of Art, remembering well
 The hopes it gave, that still up-soared,
 But one by one defeated fell,
 Cast out eternally from Heaven,
 Like those lost angels that their Lord
 From grace had driven.

So moved, to royal Westminster
 Betimes I come, and gladly find
 Those stately churches towering there,
 Whose walls that Milton saw, we see:
 Ah were, I cried, like these my mind!
 Great praise might be.

Were strength like theirs that hold the night
 With solemn watch, though London sleep,
 To arm my soul with steadfast might,
 Then fear might end and hope be sure.
 Could I like them my vigil keep,
 Like them endure.

But they were built twixt hope and fear
 By men who took the passing day,
 And gave its moments heavenly wear;
 Though they who built are darkly gone
 Their art remains, and in it they
 Are greatly known.

So art is frail, but art is strong;
 And he is wise who keeps the way
 His soul shall lead, and sings his song,
 Or bids dead stone take life and climb,—
 So yields his service for a day,
 Or for all time.

ERNEST RHYS.

SYLVIA.

I.

DEAR THORNTON,—Here I am, and I like it. It is an ideal retreat, and you may write me down an ass for having never accepted an invitation from my elderly relative before. What do you say to a long, low rose-covered house with a thatched roof on which patches of vivid yellow stoncrop flourish, and this literally in the midst of a wood! Behind the house there is a steep bank covered with a delicious tangle of flowers and ferns rising straight up, and crowned with a row of feathery larches. In front, except for a little clearing round the house, you step out of the porch into the woods. Glorious! just what I wanted—quiet, sunshine, cool green depths of forest, and exquisite bits for sketching, when I'm not far too lazy to work at all. Then the old man is delightful—scholarly, with the most courtly manners, and entirely satisfactory to look at. There is a daughter. I may as well forestall your sarcasm by stating frankly that I *am* interested in the daughter—professionally. When I have recovered from the altogether unusual fit of laziness (or call it artistic trance) into which this place has thrown me, I'm going to make *such* a sketch of her. Old Maynard has evidently some idea of the eternal fitness of things, inasmuch as he has provided her with appropriate surroundings. I'm not sure that she would even be pretty in London; but “under the greenwood tree” she is adorable. She makes you think of wood-spirits, elves, dryads—everything that is not quite human and yet teasingly beautiful, and after Dame Nature's own heart. I've been reading *Transformation* on the strength of these fancies. I'm being gradually lulled to sleep by the hum of bees in

the lime trees overhead (you conduct your correspondence as everything else out of doors in this Arcadia), and somewhere near there is a brook singing in its sleep to increase my drowsiness; so, if it pleases you, put down my rhapsodies anent this forest maiden to such stuff as dreams are made of. Why not come and see her yourself, and become incoherent also? By the way, I'm *not* in love with her except in the strictly professional sense. Mortals don't fall in love with wood-nymphs, without disastrous results; and even for the joy of acting the gallant knight in a medieval romance I couldn't put up with the Nemesis which invariably pursues those rash gentlemen. I don't know how old she is, and I wouldn't for the world inquire. Why should I not continue to half imagine her immortal, and always young? Seriously, old fellow (the thought has just struck me), why don't you come down here for a week? You've never been to Wales, I think; lovelier country you wouldn't get anywhere than round the village of Llwyn-y-bryn, which, though it has the decency not to intrude on the sylvanness of things, is really close at hand, and boasts of a very tolerable inn. I believe this would suit you. You would get on with the old man, he's devoted to his books; you would enjoy the benefit of mingled instruction and amusement in my society, *and*—you would see the daughter! The Fates, in the shape of her godfathers and godmothers at her baptism, were propitious,—her name is Sylvia.

Yours, my dear Thornton,

HAL MERIVALE.

As a result of this letter Merivale had received a telegram from Thornton about a week afterwards asking him

to take rooms at the inn, and on the same evening he was at the village station waiting for the London train.

Carl Thornton was a man of whom Merivale probably knew very little, though he would have laughed the idea to scorn if you had suggested it to him. They had been at Oxford together, and had lived quite near one another for the last two years in Paris. They knew many of each other's friends in town. After all this if he didn't know old Thornton pretty well, he ought to,—“A very good fellow Thornton, though rather heavy, you know.” Merivale was a painter. Cleverish certainly, if not decidedly clever, was his general reputation. As for Thornton, he was chiefly remarkable, among the men who knew him only slightly, for working as hard at his profession of journalism as if he had not a penny to bless himself with, though it was well known that he had independent means. In this respect, however, the two men were alike, for Hal also had money.

The train came leisurely up to the platform in its own good time, and Merivale went with eager greetings to shake hands with the one passenger who got out at the little station, a man some few years older than himself, tall, dark-eyed, and rather grave at first sight. He met Merivale with a quiet though slightly quizzical smile. That the latter would be overjoyed to see him he quite expected. Merivale was always overjoyed to see every one; that was one of his many charms, his admirers declared, his unbounded faculty for joyousness. His delight when a friend who had been suffering from a dangerous illness was pronounced out of danger was evident and unfeigned; so it was when he himself made a good bag at shooting next day.

“Delighted to see you, my dear fellow,” he repeated, as he sprang into the little light cart beside Thornton; “especially as I was afraid you wouldn't come. We'll just drive round to the Rosetree first, and then I'm to bring you along to dinner,—

that is Mr. Maynard hopes you will honour him, &c.”

“Well, I had promised to go to my married sister's in town, but she put me off at the last moment; and Paris is so insufferably hot that your description of the Hermitage sounded cooling,” explained Carl, as they drove off.

II.

THEY sent the cart on from the Rose-tree, that they might walk through the woods to the house, and when at length they came in sight of it, Thornton acknowledged the justice of Hal's praise. Long acquaintance with Merivale's faculty for exaggeration had prepared him to feel no disappointment if his host should fall short of the promised personal attractions, and he had reason to commend the justice of his friend's description, when a tall handsome old man came forward to greet them in the gentlest and most courtly fashion.

Dinner was served in a long, low wainscoted room, and Carl noticed the long-stemmed delicate glasses and the quaint dinner-service, the bowls of flowers on the table, and the monthly roses pushing their pink faces in at the latticed windows, with satisfaction and approval. Hal was in excellent spirits. He told good stories—not such good ones, to be sure, as Carl had heard him relate in slightly different circumstances, but stories suited to the taste and understanding of a scholarly old gentleman whose wine was excellent. He talked rapturously of Thornton's achievements as a writer, and at the name he was making in the literary world, whereat Carl smiled and said nothing, though Mr. Maynard was evidently much interested; and he spoke modestly, as becomes a young man, of his own pictures, and was commended for both pictures and modesty by his host.

Carl had noticed that the table was laid for four, and he had also observed that Hal often glanced at the empty place, and then at the door.

"Isn't Miss Sylvia coming?" he asked presently in a slight pause of the conversation.

Mr. Maynard smiled. "Times and seasons were not made for Sylvia," he replied; "dinner-times especially. I expect she took her lunch in the woods."

It was some time afterwards, when they had left the table and were sitting in the vine-shaded porch, that Carl first saw Sylvia. Mr. Maynard, finding a ready listener in Thornton, was now fairly launched on the subject of rare books, and had gone into the library to get a special one for Carl's admiration. Just in front of the house was an open glade, from which various winding paths led into the heart of the wood, and at the point where one of these paths broadened out into the open space a group of little children came into sight. In their midst was Sylvia. Two little girls held her hands, —one clung to her dress and trotted along with great difficulty, for the two who had secured the best places were walking on her feet with beautiful unconcern. One little maiden in a pink pinafore stepped slowly backwards in front of the party, her hands clasped behind her. All their faces were upturned, for Sylvia was telling them something, and so completely were they all absorbed that the two men could watch unobserved, as the procession came slowly across the sylvan stage. Excitement and suspense were to be read in the round eyes and parted lips of the children as Sylvia talked. She spoke rapidly and in an undertone, so that what she said was indistinguishable; but in her quick smiles and glances as she turned first to one child, then to another, and in the way she sometimes dropped her voice to a whisper, there was a wonderful suggestion of mystery. Almost in front of the porch she suddenly stopped and pointed up into the darkness of the pine-tree branches under which they happened to be standing. Instantly all eyes were upturned, and by reason of the screen of vine leaves Thornton

had an opportunity of looking at the girl critically. Something about her, even at the first hasty glance, had aroused his interest and curiosity, and justified Hal's rather mystifying mention of her. He saw a very young girl, certainly not much over seventeen. She was tall and upright, with the kind of figure a painter might choose for his picture of "Queen and Huntress." Her face,—as Thornton looked at it, it struck him how difficult her face would be to describe. Its chief beauty lay in the colouring and expression, though a half doubt arose in his mind whether this last *was* a beauty, though of its attractive power there could be no doubt. Her skin was burnt to quite a reddish brown, through which the rich colour seemed to glow in her cheeks, rounded like a young child's. Her mouth was beautiful, rather large, but arched to a perfect cupid's bow, the full red lips a little parted with a slight droop at the corners, like the lips of a pretty baby. Her eyes were unusually large, and were brown, but the clearest brown, the colour of mountain streams after rain when the sunlight slants upon the water. She wore her hair loose, falling all about her face; and the hair too was brown, a living sunny brown, holding the light at the edges of the tendril-like curls that fell across her forehead and touched her cheeks.

Thornton's first thought was that he had never seen such a distractingly pretty child; and then he looked again, and was provoked because he could not tell what was the something about her that was so strange, that made even the sense of her beauty unsatisfactory. Vague illusive notions of "sweet wild creatures" of the woods, *almost* human, began to float through his mind. Was it anything in her expression, or her eyes, or——? But suddenly Sylvia ceased talking and looked towards the porch. For a moment she paused irresolutely, and Thornton felt in an undefined sort of fashion that if some bright-eyed woodland creature, after one startled gaze at mortal men, had

darted off into the forest leaving the place where the girl had stood empty, it would hardly have seemed unnatural. For a second she looked at the two men, then suddenly turned and fled into the house by another door, leaving the children staring blankly in the direction in which she had vanished.

"Isn't she perfect?" asked Merivale excitedly. He seemed in no way surprised at her flight. "Upon my soul, I believe she tells those children more things than we dream of, &c." He called one of the little ones to him. "They are village children, I suppose," he said as the child, tempted by a coin he held up, came shyly nearer with one finger in her mouth, while the rest looked on at a safe distance.

"Does Miss Sylvia tell you pretty stories?" he asked, as the little girl took the penny without removing her eyes from his face.

She nodded and smiled.

"What does she tell you about?" was the next question.

The child gave a quick look round towards the wood, then glanced up into the trees, and smiled again, but said nothing. Hal now began to go as thoroughly into the matter as though his life depended upon finding out what the child knew. In vain; at coaxings and entreaties she merely pursed up her lips, looked mysterious and important, but refused to reply.

"Why not ask Miss Sylvia herself," said Thornton at last quietly, "if you are so keen about it?"

Merivale flushed, but his reply was cut short by Mr. Maynard's appearance, book in hand.

"Here it is, after a long hunt," he said, smoothing the cover lovingly before he opened it.

After a few moments Hal rose, and walked away whistling softly, and presently Carl saw him sitting in the library window-seat, and Sylvia was beside him.

III.

CARL quickly fell under the spell of this life in the woods. The experience

was altogether novel and had a peculiar charm for him. Mr. Maynard had persuaded him to give up his rooms at the inn, and take up his quarters at the cottage for a time. "There is plenty of room, and I shall like to have you," he said with unmistakable sincerity; and Carl had yielded. He liked the old man, there was a great charm about his courtly manners and his gentleness, a gentleness which was especially noticeable in his manner to his daughter.

The mornings were usually spent by Thornton in the library, for he had a good deal of work on hand just then, and he liked the cool shady room with the latticed windows wide open to the rustling trees. Often Mr. Maynard shared the room with him, sitting for an hour or two at a time in the low window-seat, his white head bent over a book.

One morning, as he was sitting thus, Sylvia ran past. Her father called to her and she stopped with a frown of childish impatience, and slowly retraced her steps.

"Sylvia, are you off into the woods again?" he asked gently. "You run about too much by yourself, my child. I don't quite like it."

"Mr. Merivale's going with me," she replied sulkily, her whole face changing in a moment to a perfect thunder cloud. "I thought you wanted my picture painted—"

"Yes, yes, my darling," answered her father hastily. "If Mr. Merivale is going with you that is a different matter. I didn't know he was sketching you out of doors."

"Considering that Mr. Merivale has been out with her every day this week, let's hope it's done," was Thornton's mental comment, as he went on steadily writing.

"Take plenty of lunch, dear,—and let me see my child look happy before she goes," urged Mr. Maynard tenderly.

The smile which, spreading gradually over Sylvia's face, dispersed the frowns was the prettiest thing to see. It was

as though you had watched the sun emerge slowly from behind a dark cloud and gradually flood the fields with light.

"What a provokingly lovable baby it is," thought the apparently busy writer, as Sylvia leant in at the window and patted her father's cheek, giving his long hair little twitches every now and then, like a mischievous nut-brown squirrel.

"You know what you promised me if I sat still for my picture,"—she was beginning when she caught sight of Thornton, and an indescribable kind of blank expression came creeping up into her face, a moment before so arch and coaxing. Carl had noticed the look before, when she was startled or puzzled over anything. She looked at him for a second with wide open eyes, and then walked slowly away, looking back over her shoulder as she went.

Mr. Maynard moved uneasily, glanced at Thornton, and seemed relieved to see that his head was still bent over his writing. Then he crossed the room to the book-shelves, took down a book, and stood looking at it for a long time, though an interested observer glancing over his shoulder would have seen that he held it upside down.

The busy scratching of Thornton's pen was the only sound. As he paused an instant to take a fresh sheet Mr. Maynard suddenly asked, his face still turned to the book-case, "What do you think of Sylvia?"

Carl raised his head, looked to where his host stood with his back towards him taking down a fresh book, and replied, "I think she is charming."

Mr. Maynard fluttered the leaves of the volume he held for a second, then replaced it on the shelf, and turned and faced him. "That is not what I meant, you know," he said, in a tone as different as possible from his usually gentle voice. "I mean, do you notice that she is,—different from other people?"

Carl looked at the old man, and

abandoned the idea of an ambiguous compliment which the words had suggested as a way out of the difficulty. "Yes," he replied gravely. "I have noticed it."

Mr. Maynard sighed. "If her mother had lived," he said almost inaudibly, beginning to pace the room slowly, "she would have known—She must be eighteen by now," he went on musingly. "She runs wild, and it is not good for her,—only she loves it so," he added pathetically. "Still, it is time, quite time, that she had women's society," he went on with an air of great resoluteness. "If I could only get her to go to London,—my cousin Mrs. Rivers has often asked her, but—couldn't you persuade her?" he asked, turning hopefully to Carl.

"I?" returned Carl. "I am afraid I should be no good. Wouldn't Merivale be better?" he suggested after a pause.

"Would Hal persuade any one to do anything, do you think?" inquired Mr. Maynard doubtfully.

"He would not persuade *me*," said Carl rather dryly; "but then I am not a woman."

"I don't know what to do,—how to act," continued the old man in a tone of perplexed distress, as he began pacing the room again. "I feel as though I'm neglecting my duty to her sadly, and yet, God knows, it is not for want of thinking. But there are unusual difficulties. I,—she is all I have, Mr. Thornton," he broke off hurriedly.

"I know," said Carl sympathetically.

Mr. Maynard stopped in his walk up and down the room, and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. "I should like to tell you a little about my wife, and,—and Sylvia, if it will not be boring you," he said. "I have known you a very short time, yet I feel you will understand."

"I am proud to have your confidence," answered Carl simply.

"There is little enough to tell you, after all," he said after a long silence.

"Two years from the time I first saw Marie she was in her grave. Such a little shy thing she was when I first knew her people in London. I got to know them quite by chance: they were well-meaning, every-day folks, the sort of people who are called 'religious'; and as a consequence poor Marie had lived a grey life, you understand—no colour, no life, no fun. She was crushed, repressed, and naturally she was the brightest, gayest,—well, I married her," he went on in a strained voice, "though I was twice her age, and, thank God, she was happy. I shall never forget how the colour came into her cheeks, and into her whole life too, so to speak, when she left home. So gay she was, so bright,—Sylvia has her laugh and her bright eyes. We had been married more than a year when I brought her here for the first time, and she went nearly wild with joy. She had never been in the country before, and she was just like some wild caged thing set free. Her happiness over the flowers and the birds! I remember one day when she saw a squirrel for the first time,—it was pretty to see her colour come with delight." He took off his spectacles, and was a long time polishing them before he went on. "Sylvia was born here," he said, "and her mother died two days afterwards. She would not have the little one called Marie, but when I suggested Sylvia she smiled. So Sylvia was born in the woods you see, and she has the love of the woods in her blood. I often wonder whether that is why she is,—different. We have spent every summer here since she was born, and in the winter we go to the sea. You may think it a lonely life for the child, but she is happy. It would break my heart if she were not happy!" he added, tremulously, "and that is why I cannot bear to force her to go away. She cannot bear towns,—but she must go,—she *must* go," he repeated sadly.

Carl made no remark for some time when the old man ceased. Then he said, "Thank you for telling me;" and

after a little hesitation, "If ever I can help you—I know it isn't likely, but if——"

"Thank you, my boy, thank you," said Mr. Maynard, his eyes a little dim.

IV.

MERIVALE and Sylvia had gone to the Torrent Glen nearly every day for the past week, and yet Hal was as enthusiastically delighted with the spot as ever, though it was the scene of the hardest labour he had ever bestowed with a view to gaining any girl's fancy,—to leave heart out of the question. Labour not altogether thrown away, though there remained much to be done. Even now, it was a matter of delighted self-congratulation with him when he succeeded in keeping the girl at his side for half an hour at a time; and when she rushed off, as, despite his utmost care she still would do, urged by a sudden impulse of impatience or mere freakishness, he was more annoyed than surprised. But Hal's was a buoyant spirit, and the difficulties of the game merely spurred him on to fresh efforts. Should a man so accustomed to conducting clever flirtations as he be foiled by a country child like this, above all, one so delightfully unsophisticated and ignorant? Perish the ignoble thought!

Such a beautiful place it was! A broad deep cleft in the rocks right in the heart of the forest, in shape like a horseshoe, along whose floor hurried a boulder-strewn stream fed by the dashing waterfall which leapt over the cliff at the top of the glen. A winding, mossy path overhung the river on either side, cut half way between the straight red cliffs above and the grassy bank below sloping steeply to the water's edge. Trees and underwood hung over the water, young trees clung by their roots to the red-brown cliffs and flung over them a delicate veil of green, and trees looked down from the wooded heights above the glen, their leaves quivering against the

intense blue of the sky on this glorious summer day. Sylvia sprang lightly from one wet stone to another, till she reached mid-stream at the foot of the waterfall, where the river, turning a little aside, made a deep wide pool.

"Come and see how quiet the water is here," she called, in her peculiarly clear, fresh voice. Hal was setting up his easel, but he left it at once to obey. Before he could reach her she had crossed the stream and was half way up the opposite bank, holding with one hand to a branch, while she leant over to peer into a bird's nest. Merivale saw her smile as she looked,—he had seen her smile just so to the children she talked with.

He turned away with an impatient shrug.

"I shall have to wait half an hour till my lady chooses to come down, I suppose," he thought, frowning, and busying himself once more with his painting apparatus. But Sylvia was beside him.

"Are you ready for me?" she asked, seating herself in the required attitude.

"I await your pleasure, Miss Sylvia," he answered, with a bow and a sunny smile.

After a moment she laughed softly, and then pouted. "*Miss Sylvia*," she mocked. "Just what my old nurse says."

"Miss Maynard,—I ask pardon," replied Hal with exaggerated gravity, looking at her furtively.

Sylvia frowned. "That's what that grave friend of yours calls me," screwing up her face into what was evidently intended to be a representation of Thornton's normal expression. "I don't like him. I'm afraid of him," she added, pouting again.

"Sylvia!" then exclaimed Hal, radiantly. "'Who is Sylvia, what is she, that all our swains commend her?'" he began to sing, painting away vigorously.

"Who said that?" asked Sylvia, curiously.

"A gentleman named William Shakespeare,—Sylvia."

"Is he alive?" she asked. Hal looked up, but the question was evidently in perfect good faith, and he mentally registered one more astonished shock adroitly disguised.

"No," he replied, "not now; but he knew all about *you* before he died."

"How? Why?" inquired Sylvia, like an eager child.

"Why, he says,—'Who is Sylvia?' So he must have known that it is a puzzle. I give it up. She isn't an Undine; perhaps she's a Dryad."

"What do you say?" pursued Sylvia, wrinkling her forehead.

"Not a water-maiden, a forest-maiden."

Sylvia still looked perplexed.

"You have heard of Undine, haven't you, Sylvia?" he asked, leaning on his easel, and fixing his bright eyes on her face.

"No," said Sylvia, moving her head restlessly and dropping her eyes. She made a half movement as if to rise.

Hal took up his brushes. "It's a story," he said hastily. Sylvia settled down as he began "Once upon a time," and after the first few words listened attentively.

Hal told the beautiful story well. The situation appealed to his artistic sense. What legend could more appropriately be told here, to the accompaniment of murmuring water? And where should he find a more appropriate listener? He was not disappointed in its effect on the girl.

"Why did she say, 'I thank thee for my soul'?" she asked, when the story was finished. "She was happier without. I would rather be gay without care."

Hal smiled. "Exactly what you are, my child.

Then to Sylvia let us sing,
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling,

he chanted.

"You like me not to have a soul, then?" observed Sylvia.

Merivale started. It was one of her particularly elf-like characteristics,

that trick she had of occasionally understanding something he had thought beyond her.

"Sylvia is perfect as she is," he replied, laughing to conceal his discomfort; "for 'all her swains (of whom let *me* be chief, Sylvia) commend her.'"

"You never answer me," exclaimed the girl angrily; "and I'm tired of sitting still," springing to her feet on the broad flat stone as she spoke. Hal groaned but submitted perforce. To induce Sylvia to sit still one moment after she had once begun to fidget, he admitted, with the modesty of true greatness, to be a task beyond him.

"Let us have lunch," he hastened to propose, for her restless eyes had begun to rove the glen, and experience had made him aware that, unless her thoughts were speedily diverted, she would be off like the wind. "The hardest work I ever had in my life," he murmured, as he unpacked the basket hurriedly, Sylvia watching him uncertainly from where she stood poised on the stone as if for immediate flight. "But if I paint the picture I've got in my mind, my name's made to a dead certainty. Though, by Jove! I believe I'd rather tame this creature than get into the Academy," he added, mentally, as Sylvia, when everything was ready, began to walk with lingering dainty steps towards him, casting bright glances first on him, then on the temptingly spread cloth, and finally all around her, as one whom "every prospect pleases." Hal almost held his breath while he waited to see whether she would endorse the opinion expressed in the next line. Apparently not, for, after a few more seconds of hesitation, she took her place beside him.

Evidently she had not stayed because she was hungry. In a minute or two she jumped up, after crumbling her bread on the stones for the birds, and went to the picture on the easel. After a moment she smiled, as a child smiles when it sees its reflection in the glass,

and Hal came and stood behind her. Presently his arm stole round her shoulder while he went on talking in an even tone, inwardly remarking with some trepidation that this kind of thing was a bold move, and wondering whether it was made too soon. Sylvia started a little, looked down at his hand curiously, but did not stir.

"Do you think I could ever learn to paint?" she asked. "I should like to make pictures of the birds and the creatures."

"Don't learn to do anything so commonplace and like an ordinary mortal, Sylvia. The birds would despise you; you would never get them to talk to you any more."

Sylvia whisked suddenly round. "How do you know they do?" she cried, her large, bright eyes full of startled dismay. "I never told you; you are not a child."

"No, but I wish I were, if you would talk to me, Sylvia." He sank his voice to a whisper, and spoke half-banteringly. "Then I should know how you sit like a wood-queen under the trees sometimes, and little feet come softly pattering, and bright eyes look up to you from the ground and down upon you from the branches; and you hear what the merry brown hares have to say, and you know what the impudent wave of the squirrel's tail means, and what the birds talk about when the day is dawning,—eh, Sylvia?" said Hal mischievously.

Sylvia looked at him, and great tears began to glitter on her eyelashes.

"You have no *right* to listen when I talk to the children," she began fiercely, "for grown up people it is nonsense, but—" she struggled wildly to get free, but Hal held her and soothed her, till suddenly she laughed. "What nonsense!" she cried; and then for a moment that indescribable expression Thornton had noticed crept into her face. Hal had also noticed it before.

"Look, Sylvia!" he said, to change the subject. "Tell me what you think of this," and he took a sketch from his

portfolio and handed it to her. It was the head of a girl. Her dark hair was swept back over a white forehead in loose waves. The face had a kind of transparent paleness, out of which, under dark eyebrows fringed with dark lashes, a pair of blue eyes seemed to burn clearly, almost as though there was a light behind them. A long, white throat upheld the head, as a stalk upholds a white flower. In the corner under the sketch was scrawled, "O rare pale Margaret."

"Who is she?" demanded Sylvia.

"My cousin."

"Why do you call her that?" pointing to the words underneath.

"To tease her chiefly," Hal answered.

"She is pale, though," objected Sylvia.

"Yes, but do you think she's pretty?"

"Pretty! I don't know. I never thought about *girls* being pretty. *Birds* are pretty, and squirrels and flowers."

"And girls too, fortunately for us," laughed Hal, looking at her.

"Has *she* a soul?" inquired Sylvia suddenly.

"Yes; more soul than body, some people think."

"Do you like her?" was the next question, put anxiously while she looked straight at him.

"Jealousy,—just the merest *soupeçon*! A most powerful agent," thought Hal, and the laughter suddenly died out of his eyes. "Yes, Sylvia," he replied quietly, gently taking the sketch from her hands and replacing it reverently in the portfolio.

"What is her name?" The question came from a distance, and Sylvia stood with her back towards him, ostentatiously holding out her hands to the spray of the waterfall.

"Margaret Rivers."

"Rivers!" Sylvia was back at his side in a moment, her eyes aglow with eagerness. "Why, Mrs. Rivers has asked me to stay with her, but I wouldn't go. Now I shall. But I shall

hate that pale girl with a soul," she added in her characteristic tone, half-defiant, half-sulky. "I'm going home," she announced, looking back over her shoulder for Hal to follow, which he did, entirely satisfied with the morning's work, though hardly a touch had been added to the picture.

V.

JUNE had slid into July, and Thornton and Merivale were still at the cottage. Mr. Maynard refused to hear of Carl's departure, and almost against his will he stayed, for, if he had spoken truly, the days did not go merrily for him. Mixed with the real affection he began to feel for his host was a considerable degree of impatience. Could he not see what was going on under his eyes every day? But it was plain that though he spoke of Sylvia's eighteen years she was still a child, still his "little daughter" to him, and against his placid security Carl felt powerless,—and yet,—

One moonlight evening late in July he was sitting alone in the porch, when he saw Sylvia come out of the house. He watched her as she bent down to pat and coax the big dogs straining at their chains in an ecstasy of joy at seeing her, and he heard her laugh as they sprang round her. Almost at the same moment she turned with a quick movement towards the forest; the moon shone full on her face, and Thornton saw her suddenly throw up her arms and burst into a passion of tears. The action was childish and yet infinitely pathetic. Carl in the darkness of the porch half rose with some vague notion of comforting her, while he muttered something between his teeth; but in a second almost she was smiling again, while the tears still glistened on her cheeks.

Next morning Sylvia waited long and impatiently for Merivale. She saw him at last coming out of the library followed by Carl, to whom he turned as they reached the door and said a few words. The air of frank

gaiety he usually wore had dropped from his face like a mask, leaving a very different expression in its place. "I leave to-morrow, as I've just been telling Mr. Maynard," he said, in a tone of sullen anger; "so you've rather wasted the penny tract business, Thornton. Keep it till you find an appreciative audience." "Coming, Sylvia!" he added in gay tones.

"And I'm a fool for my pains," was Carl's candid self-criticism. "I might have known there couldn't be much more of it. Why, it's lasted a month!"

VI.

It happened that Thornton and Merivale came to town about the same time that autumn. Merivale went home, and Thornton (who had been staying on at the Hermitage) to his sister's house.

Two years before, he and Margaret Rivers, Hal's cousin, had seen a great deal of one another, with the result that, when Carl left London rather suddenly in the very height of the season, the world was henceforward a different and a considerably sadder place to both of them. But that was an old story; and that anything of this kind had ever happened would never have been guessed by either of these two very self-possessed people of the other, or, indeed, by the world (as it is called) at large. They met again this October as a natural thing, for Mrs. Maitland, Carl's sister, was a constant visitor at Vivian Square, and they met, of course, with irreproachable composure on either side.

At this time Margaret was deeply though silently troubled about Sylvia, who had now been with them some two months. At first sight she had felt strangely drawn to the child, and the feeling she grew to have for her was one of great tenderness mingled with a kind of sadness. There was something so pathetic about her, even when she was merriest,—chiefly when she was merriest, perhaps. Lately Margaret had felt this more strongly,

and she instinctively knew that Thornton was also not insensible to it.

"It hurts me to take her out with me," she said to Carl one day. "It is almost like setting some poor little wild thing free in the midst of a crowd. She has just that hunted look in her eyes. I cannot think why she *will* stay."

Carl knew, but said nothing, and soon Margaret knew also. She had gone into Sylvia's room one night, and found her wrapped in a white dressing-gown sitting before the glass, her hair falling in a shower round her shoulders, her eyes like two stars. Almost before the door was closed she began without any preface, "Margaret, has any man ever kissed you?"

Margaret opened her blue eyes wide and laughed a little. "No, Sylvia," she said.

Sylvia looked surprised, and a little superior. "Oh," she said, "I should have thought they would. But suppose one did?" she persisted.

"I can't suppose it," answered Margaret lightly, half laughing, and colouring at the same time; "unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless of course he loved me, and we were going to be married," she said hurriedly.

"And is that what a man means if he kisses you?"

"That's what any man who kissed *me* would mean."

"Then Hal Merivale is going to marry *me*," stated Sylvia quietly, her hands folded in her lap, her great eyes blazing with excitement, as she fixed them on Margaret.

She had never before mentioned Merivale's name, whereat Margaret had sometimes secretly wondered; but that morning Mrs. Rivers had announced the news that he was in town, and intended to remain at home and set up a studio. "Surely, surely Hal could never have been so base!" was Margaret's thought after her first start of surprise. "Tell me, Sylvia, does your father know of this?" she asked anxiously.

"No," returned Sylvia sulkily. Then, after a second, "Father thinks I am a little girl," she said resentfully, drawing herself up with dignity.

Before Margaret left her she knew enough about a recent episode in her cousin's life to make her face and her heart full of bitterness. "To think that I once *liked* Hal Merivale," she thought, while her lip curled; but now, "*How* am I going to undeceive and comfort that poor child?" was her despairing question.

VII.

HAL MERIVALE had come to town that autumn in an earnest mood. His picture was finished, and never before had he felt so well satisfied with any of his work. It had been praised too by good critics. They had seemed surprised while they praised it, and Hal himself was surprised at feeling the stir of new possibilities within him. Despite his lightness and buoyancy, Hal was ambitious. He had a great deal in his favour—money, position, friends,—what was there to prevent him from becoming famous? With these reflections, his cousin, Margaret Rivers, had lately occupied a great deal of his mind. He had always admired her. She was the kind of woman a rising man ought to have for his wife. The two years which had passed since he last saw her had added to her beauty, he thought, and the very coldness in her manner piqued him and increased his admiration. The first evening he saw the two girls together he was delighted with the contrast between them. Sylvia was wildly gay and mischievous. In the new train of ideas which he had lately been following he had almost forgotten that Sylvia would be in London; but it was of course charming to see her again. Afterwards when he met her, he remarked more than once how he had always said her prettiness depended chiefly on the setting. "London doesn't suit you, Sylvia," he said to her once. "When are you going to

summon your woodland subjects to take their queen home in triumph?"

One day when Carl Thornton had come to call on Mrs. Rivers, he found her ready to go out. "Margaret and I are going to Hal's studio to see his picture," she explained. "Will you come too?"

The two men had avoided one another by tacit consent since their parting at the Hermitage, but Carl could not well refuse, and after all Merivale was out.

Margaret and he remained standing before the picture, while Mrs. Rivers was examining some old china at a little distance. "How he could have had the heart to paint it!" thought Margaret. Aloud she said, "It's a ridiculous fancy of course, for he has caught her laughing look to perfection; but I think it's the saddest picture I have ever seen."

"Yes," replied Thornton, in an unmoved sort of way. "That's its cleverness, I suppose. Merivale has succeeded admirably."

Some few days afterwards Margaret had arranged to spend a day with friends in the country. She started quite early in the morning, with a feeling of positive relief. "I am getting morbid about Sylvia," she thought on the journey. "If she would only be tiresome as she was at first. But those great brown wistful eyes,—I cannot bear to see them!"

It was late when she returned, and she thought that the maid who opened the door for her looked at her curiously. "Miss Maynard?" she began involuntarily. "She's gone, miss; she went out early this morning. Mistress has been out all day too, you know, but of course she thought Miss Maynard had only gone for a walk, but——"

Margaret went straight up to Sylvia's room; dresses were lying on the bed, on the floor; Sylvia's trunk half packed stood in the middle of the room. Everything was in disorder. Margaret looked round breathlessly, and then she caught sight of a letter lying on the dressing-table. She

crossed the room and took it up. It was addressed to her, and it was open, and she saw that it was from Hal Merivale. Then she understood.

Half an hour later a ring at the bell roused her from a kind of stupor of unreasoning fear, and with a thrill of relief and gladness she heard Carl Thornton's voice in the hall. With the letter in her hand she went straight down stairs to the drawing-room. Disjointed sentences of the letter she had just read seemed to be burning themselves into her mind.

When we were interrupted last night, you began to speak of Sylvia. Poor little Sylvia! As a picture she is charming (I am quoting a remark I have heard several times lately), but do you think I could care for a woman who has no soul? You must have discovered by this time that the poor child is not quite—well, not quite like other people—one does not like to say anything unpleasant when speaking of Sylvia.

Without a moment's deliberation Margaret explained the whole matter to Thornton. It seemed perfectly natural that he should know this last thing,—he knew all the rest.

"But this letter was addressed to *you*," he said, looking puzzled.

"Yes; but Sylvia opened it you see, and read it."

"Opened a letter addressed to *you*!" he repeated.

"Oh," she cried, with a kind of impatience, "I thought you knew Sylvia better. Don't you see that she is morally irresponsible? She never does, or leaves undone, anything because it is right or wrong. She does not know what is right or wrong. She will do anything to please anyone she is fond of; *that* she understands; but what is abstract right to her? It is unintelligible! She knew Hal's writing, and she opened the letter to see what he said to me. Any child would have done the same kind of thing before it had been expressly forbidden," she cried, her eyes full of tears.

"Do not be so distressed," he began gently, "we must telegraph to Llwyn-
No. 380.—VOL. LXIV.

y-bryn, but I believe we shall hear. Ah! here is a telegram."

Margaret rushed to take it and tore open the yellow envelope, then she gave it to him. "Sylvia just arrived. Letter follows," was the message.

"Oh, how thankful I am!" she half sobbed, leaning on the rail at the bottom of the stairs and trembling from head to foot now that the strain of a great unformed dread was removed. Carl made a sudden movement towards her, but Margaret had heard the sound of carriage wheels, and in an instant was calm again as she opened the door for her mother.

VIII.

Two days later, in the afternoon, Merivale called at Vivian Place to see Margaret. There was no lamp in the room into which he was shown, and when she came in it was almost too dark to see her face, but Hal plunged into the midst of things at once with characteristic impetuosity.

"You didn't answer my letter, Margaret," he began, "so I have come myself to hear my fate. Margaret," he went on with rising anger in his tone, as she did not speak, "you are never going to be so unjust as to let a ridiculous fancy about that little, half-witted——"

"Stop!" cried Margaret, and he hardly knew her voice, "wait a minute! You may be sorry to have said anything,—unpleasant. Sylvia is dead."

She saw him turn white in the gathering dusk. "*Dead!*" he repeated hoarsely. "What do you mean? She is here."

"No; she went home. She read your letter to me, and then she went home. Mr. Thornton was telegraphed for," she went on in the same hard, mechanical voice which never faltered, "and they had brought her home. She had been to the Torrent Walk late in the evening, and she must have,—slipped on the stones and fallen into the water. There is a deep pool, Mr.

Thornton says,—and she was there. I dare say you know the spot.”

Hal shuddered.

“This was found near the waterfall. Mr. Thornton sent it to me, but I see it is yours; perhaps you had better have it.”

She held out a book to him. He took it tremblingly, and looked at it in a dazed, bewildered way. It was a copy of *Undine*. There was a leaf turned down at the place where Undine says to her husband, “I thank thee for my soul.” Neither of them spoke. Hal sat as if turned to stone.

“Poor little Sylvia,” whispered Margaret at last. “I wonder if she has found her soul now! If she has she owes it to you, Hal. No wonder she is grateful.”

When Hal raised his head the room was empty.

Carl had been summoned by old Mr. Maynard. “You said, if ever you could help me, my boy,” said the old man brokenly when he came.

Then followed terrible days. Carl felt that he could not bear to see the old man’s furtive glance at him, full of dread, yet questioning, whenever he spoke of the “accident.” The outspokenness of Sylvia’s old nurse was, he felt, a relief. “There’s them that’ll have to answer to God for this child’s life, sir,” she said solemnly. “Hadn’t she a heart, because she wasn’t——?” She did not complete the sentence, but there was no need.

For the rest of his life Carl will remember how the glen looked the day before he returned to London. He felt he must see it once again. It was a grey November day. The stream was swollen with rains, and rushed with a hoarse complaining voice over the rocks. The familiar dash of the waterfall sounded inexpressibly dreary in the gathering twilight. A wind was rising, and swept moaning through the naked boughs. Every now and then

a few yellow leaves whirled eddying down from the bare woods above. As he stood there, a shower of dead leaves fell suddenly on the flat stone where a few months ago Sylvia had sat under green boughs for her picture.

Thornton turned hurriedly and walked away. When everything was over he went straight back to Margaret.

As she came into the room he looked at her sad eyes, and then went to her and took both her hands. “I do not ask you to forgive me for coming now, Margaret,” he said, “because you know—— Two years ago I made a great mistake. I thought it was Merivale then. I have suffered for it ever since. Am I to go on suffering?”

Margaret looked at him, and in her eyes he read an unspoken question. “Never!” he said. “Let us have no more mistakes, Margaret, never in that way,—though I would have given years of my life,” his voice trembled, “to have saved the poor child from herself. Then is it, Yes?” he whispered with his arms round her.

“Yes,” said Margaret with a long quivering sigh. Suddenly she broke into a storm of sobs. “Sylvia! my poor little Sylvia!” she cried. “How wicked it is of me to be so happy when you are out there in the cold!”

They persuaded old Mr. Maynard to make his home with them when they were married, and the poor, broken-hearted old man came to them. He spent much time over his books, and was gentle and courtly as of old, but the first time they saw him smile was when Margaret put her baby in his arms. “We want to call her Sylvia,” she said softly, as he stroked the baby’s little brown head delicately, “but——” she hesitated.

“Yes, my dear,” he answered, and his eyes filled with tears; “yes, I should like it.”

MOLTKE AS A MAN OF LETTERS.

THE life and labours of Count Moltke will provide themes for writers of many nationalities for a long time to come. Characters of such various excellence are rare indeed. In him met the patriot, the soldier, the traveller, the omnivorous reader, the untiring student, the master of literary style, the devoted husband, the simple and high-minded gentleman. The peculiar circumstances of his country have naturally brought his military genius into a prominence greater than that vouchsafed to his other qualities. Yet every side of his character contributed its own share to the singular completeness of his public services. To have shattered the bullying militarism of France was to Moltke no mere strategical triumph. It was the end of German servitude, the end of divided counsels, the end of a situation in which one German prince made mean bargains with the common enemy, while another was consumed with patriotic shame. Englishmen above all, despite the lessons of five hundred years' war with France, need to be reminded of these facts. The silver streak of the Channel, as yet unbridged and untunnelled, has, no doubt, proved a safer defence than the Rhine. Yet throughout the world, from Newfoundland to the Pacific, England is beset by French "claims" which generally derive peculiar acidity from their connection with some ancient French defeat. To Moltke, who was born in the days of Germany's shame, her emancipation was a high and holy work. The native of a country which centuries of French aggression had covered with ruins, and whose people long subjection to the will of France had largely denationalised, could have but small occasion to think of himself more

highly than he ought to think. Here lies perhaps the secret both of Moltke's modesty and of his silent concentration on the task before him. It is true that recent French commentators see in this side of his character little beyond "the ferocity of a pietist who looks on war as a divine institution."¹ We see in it rather a recognition that the highest human gifts, the rarest professional skill, were but the means of securing the emancipation of Germany from a yoke as unnatural as it was ancient and strong. A mind so disciplined would regard success as matter not for offensive jubilation but for heartfelt gratitude. And so we learn without surprise that when the white flag appeared on the walls of Sedan, Moltke exclaimed that now perhaps the Reichstag would vote adequate supplies for the national defence. It would argue small knowledge of French ways of thought to marvel at the writer in the *République Française* who censures Moltke's "ignorance of the poetry of war." Had a French marshal had the chance of standing under similar conditions before Mainz or Ehrenbreitstein his comments would, no doubt, have been of a highly poetical nature.

Moltke's military work and his general labours in the cause of German unity will, we repeat, be amply dealt with by soldiers and politicians. At the date of his death half a dozen accounts of his life were already in existence. In time to come the history of his campaigns will long form a subject for elaborate technical comment. His own laborious methods are open to every soldier, though in other hands they may compass but a modest share of his practical success. His political work, again, is likely to

¹ *République Française*, April 26th, 1891.

retain an enduring interest for the patriots of every country. His deep study of the national needs, his untiring advocacy of every measure, however unpopular, which tended to the strength and independence of Germany, the humble devotion of his great genius to the public service—these are examples for imitation by Englishmen as well as Germans. In these few pages neither the soldier nor the statesman will be discussed, but the man as he showed himself in days of comparative obscurity to the readers of his inimitable letters from foreign countries. These writings are insufficiently known in England, owing as well to the lateness of their appearance in an English dress as to the concentration of public interest on his triumphs in the field. We find in them the same combination of serious matter with humorous comment which delights us in the pages of *Eothen*. His power of seizing the features of a new city or country, or of explaining the circumstances of a people by a rapid mental retrospect of their history, is supplemented by a power of expression which is no less remarkable. His private letters, like his military treatises, abound with descriptive paragraphs which present the results of study and experience in a form lucid, concentrated, and clear-cut as a cameo. Be the subject grave or gay, lively or severe, the reader is left under the double charm of matter and manner. Moltke's personal character stands out from every page of these confidential utterances. Here are displayed his unchanging love for friends and relations, his sympathy with distress, his worship of duty, his contempt of ostentation, his deep consciousness of the painful inequalities of human life. Here also we recognise the militant side of a character which, with just a tinge of insular prejudice, we have set up as peculiarly English. Moltke appears as the quick determined man of action, full of resource in difficulty, and alive to the ridiculous side even of a loss or failure.

The German officer, with all his undeniable bravery, self-control, and industry, is not a popular person in this country. The ordinary British civilian knows him, or rather imagines him, as a stiff, narrow pedant, filled with a belated feudal arrogance and with contempt for the humbler classes of his own and every other country. Notions such as these may perhaps be modified by study of the mind of one who was for a whole generation greatest among these derided warriors. "It is impossible," said *The Times*, when commenting on Moltke's death, "that a mind and a character of this kind should have been so long dominant in the German army, and so long respected among the German people, without leaving a deep mark on the rising generation."

Moltke's Letters from foreign countries belong to three periods of time. His *Letters from Turkey* were written during the years 1835 to 1839 to his sister, Mrs. Burt. In the last of these years he joined the staff of the Turkish army opposed to the forces of Mehemet Ali the rebel Viceroy of Egypt, and his valiant son Ibrahim Pasha. Second in order come his *Wanderings about Rome*, which he wrote while holding the position of Adjutant to Prince Henry of Prussia from 1845 to 1846. On the Prince's death in 1846 he paid a flying visit to Spain and wrote his *Spanish Diary*, which records the disgust inspired in him by the only bull-fight that he ever witnessed. The third division of his Letters belongs to the year 1856, the year of the Peace of Paris. In the month of August he attended Prince Frederick William of Prussia (the late Emperor Frederick III.) to the Coronation of the Czar Alexander II. at St. Petersburg. The *Letters from Russia* which described his experiences, were addressed to his English wife, Mrs. Burt's step-daughter, to whom he had been married since 1842. He next visited England with the Prince, who was, two years later, to become our Queen's son-in-law. In

1858 and 1861 he was again in England. No student of Moltke's works can have failed to observe the frequency of his references to the history and political and social conditions of our country. In Asiatic Turkey he praises Colonel Chesney for his "glorious failure" to establish steam-communication with India by the Euphrates Valley, and he announces to his wife that his own surveys now form a continuation of those made by that illustrious officer. In discussing the Turkish views of Western dress he quotes Morier's *Hajji Baba*. From Malatia, which possessed no carriage, he writes that the most wretched vehicle would be here "like Queen Victoria's coronation coach." In Russia, the architecture of English manor-houses, the dome of St. Paul's, the drawing-rooms at St. James's Palace, the "natural velvet of the Windsor turf," the origin and national position of the English nobility, the wages of English labourers, are among the parallels which he employs in the relation of the motley sights and circumstances surrounding him.

From England he accompanied his Prince to Paris, where he spent ten days. Brief as are the comments of his *Letters from Paris* on a sojourn mainly occupied in pleasure, it is abundantly clear that he doubted the stability of the Second Empire. "You must read between the lines of my letters," he tells his correspondent. "Matters here are not in a normal condition. But it would be difficult to specify anything that needs amendment in the actual circumstances. Nobody can be his own grandson, and the position of the founder of a new dynasty differs much from that of the heir of an array of legitimate predecessors. One has only to keep to the old course; the other has to open out new paths, and infinitely more depends on his personality." Such are the sources whence we propose to draw our illustrations of some points in Moltke's mind and character. His own words, though in an English dress,

will best attest his humour, his good feeling, his powers of perception and description, and his large share of that knowledge of the Asiatic character with which Englishmen have achieved such marvels throughout the East.

Here is a description of the Roman Campagna in 1846:—"This waste Campagna has an indescribable charm of its own. It is the home of contrasts, of a past filled with the richest life, and of a present buried in the deepest silence. The castle of the Gaetani cleaves to Metella's grave, and the dome of Michael Angelo rises above Nero's Circus. The graves of Christian martyrs lie side by side with heathen columbaria, and modern high-roads pass through the arches of ancient aqueducts. The thunder-stricken oak of Tasso looks down from yonder hills where Pyrrhus encamped. Steamers cut the flood of yellow Tiber, and soon railway trains will rush through the fields which once bore triumphal cars." In the same year Moltke visited La Carolina, near Cordova, where he found a German colony which aroused in him some bitter reflections. "It was like passing suddenly into a different country, for the people had fair hair and honest square German faces. This is a colony of Swabians which Olivarez, the best of Spanish statesmen, settled here last century to increase the population of the Sierra Morena. Not a soul of them had retained a word of German, for our people are everywhere the best of settlers, the quietest of subjects, the most industrious of labourers, but they cease to be Germans. They are Frenchmen in Alsace, Russians in Courland, Americans on the Mississippi, and Spaniards in the Sierra Morena. Yes! they are ashamed of their own dismembered and impotent country!"

Moltke's Russian visit gave ample scope to his powers of description. Here is a portrait of Alexander II., then the centre of a gorgeous ceremonial, and whose mangled remains Moltke was to see committed to the

grave in 1881. "The Czar made a very pleasant impression on me. He possesses neither the classic beauty nor the marble severity of his father, Nicholas, but he is a singularly handsome man with a majestic bearing. He looks somewhat worn, and one is tempted to believe that events have marked his noble features with that gravity which conflicts with the benevolent expression of his great eyes. . . . Upon his accession he found Europe in arms against him, and within his own boundless empire he has yet to carry out reforms which need the firmest of hands. Could he then meet his mighty task otherwise than seriously!"

In a few lines he sketches the history of the growth of St. Petersburg:—"Two centuries ago no inhabitant of Europe had ever heard of the Neva. The river had flowed for thousands of years through untrodden forests. It bore no vessel on its back, the Finnish hunters alone ranged now and then along its banks. Now, the Neva is famous throughout the world, it is one of the main arteries of the Russian empire, it bears fleets of merchantmen, and provides half a million of human beings with their daily drinking water. It yields the only available clear water, that of all the wells is brown and unfit to drink. It is true that the river also constitutes a permanent danger to the city. The Gulf of Finland narrows like a funnel in the direction of St. Petersburg. A strong west wind drives the sea violently into this gut, the river water is forced back and the course of the Neva is reversed. If this happens when the ice is in motion the danger is increased. The islands are flooded first of all, then the water pours over the breastwork of the walled embankments and everything is submerged, as the highest point of the city is only fifteen feet above sea-level. In 1824 the floods reached the second storeys of the houses. Many people were drowned, and the epidemics, caused by a dampness which nothing could

remove, raged for a very long time. No town with a historical development would have been built in so defenceless a position. But the iron-willed Czar wished it to be there, and so succeeding generations had to bear the consequences." With still fewer touches Moscow is thus brought before us. "When from the lofty terrace of the Kremlin I survey this enormous city, the white houses with roofs of bright green, and surrounded by dark trees, the high towers and innumerable churches with gilded domes, I think of the views of Prague from the Hradschin, of Pesth from Buda, or of Palermo from Monte Reale. Yet here everything is different, and as for the Kremlin, the centre of all this world, there is nothing with which you could compare it. These white battlemented walls, fifty or sixty feet high, the huge towered gates, the mighty palace of the old Czars, the palace of the Patriarch, the bell-tower of Ivan Veliki, and the many quaint churches—these form a whole which cannot be found elsewhere in the world."

Here again is a dip into the past days of Russian subjection to the Tartars:—"In the evening I drove to Petroskoi. . . . This fortress, painted red and white, with its lights falling through lofty windows on the dark forest below, is like some fabulous structure in the *Arabian Nights*. In this country every monastery and castle is fortified. They constituted the only points which could be held when the Golden Horde came rushing on with its twenty or thirty thousand horsemen and devastated all the flat country. Long after their yoke had been broken, the Tartars in their Khanate of the Crimea were terrible enemies. The watchmen gazed unceasingly from the summit of the Kremlin towards the wide plain to the south, and when the dust-clouds arose there and the great bell of Ivan Veliki sounded the alarm, then every human being fled behind the walls of the Kremlin or of the monasteries, against which the fury of the mounted hordes

dashed fruitlessly and broke. In the monasteries the Christianity, the learning, and the civilisation of Russia found safety, and from them in later times proceeded her liberation from the rule of Mongols and Poles."

Nothing in Russia impressed Moltke more strongly than the devoted submissiveness of the people, whether soldiers or civilians. "The Russian," he writes, "must positively have a master; if he has none, he sets himself to find one. Each community chooses its *Starost*, or elder, from its white-haired men, else it would be like a swarm of bees without a queen. 'Our land is good, but we have nobody over us. Come and rule us.' Thus ran the message of the Russian commons to Rurik the Varangian, And so it is with the Russian soldier. Without his captain he would be in deadly perplexity. Who would think for him, lead him, or punish him? His captain may possibly defraud him of his due or ill-treat him in anger, but nevertheless he loves him better than he would a German officer whose punishments are just and well-considered. If a European soldier were to see his non-commissioned officer drunk, discipline would become impossible; but the Russian puts him to bed, wipes him clean, and obeys him as faithfully as ever on the morrow when his fit is over."

The following extract deals with a humble personage whose lot remained unaffected by the glories of his Czar's coronation. On entering the army he had ceased to be a serf and so lost for ever the right to be maintained by his owner. He had now been discharged without a pension:—"To-day a discharged soldier, crippled at Sebastopol, asked me for alms Here was a man who, but a few months back, had bled for his country, and was now begging—begging in full sight of the Kremlin, the heart of this empire which owes its very existence to its faithful, God-fearing, brave, and patient soldiers. Surely these devoted sufferers must be heirs of Paradise.

The newly-made freeman with his long grey cloak and humbly bared head went off into the wide world of Holy Russia, and we—drove in the Czar's carriage to a magnificent dinner." A similar passage occurs in Moltke's description of the Kurdish campaign of 1838:—"At the gate of the captured fort I met a Kurd who was carrying his wounded brother. The poor fellow had been shot in the leg, and his bearer told me that his agony had already lasted a week. I sent for the surgeon, who said, 'Why, the man is only a Kurd!' He repeated this remark several times and with a raised voice, as though to say, 'Don't you see that your request is mere folly?' Now it is simply disgraceful to send 3,000 men into the field attended by one ignorant barber. One of our gunners was run over eight days ago, and even to-day not a soul knows whether his leg is broken or merely contused. Meanwhile the man lies helpless in his tent. This condition of the surgical service will, I hope, make Hafiz Pasha apply to the Seraskier Before the Turks have instituted their botanical garden and their high school at Galata Serai they will have lost hundreds of their best and most willing soldiers."

Most of the subsequent passages illustrate Moltke's singular appreciation of a humorous speech or situation:—"The common Turk cannot imagine why his Sultan should take the trouble to turn himself into a Giaour, and still cherishes the belief that the Elchis, or foreign ambassadors, have only come to beg the Padishah to confer a crown on their kings. 'Why,' said a mollah in the meeting at Biredjik, 'should not ten thousand Osmanli mount their horses to-day and ride to Moscow with a firm trust in Allah and their sharp swords?' 'Why not, indeed?' answered a Turkish officer, 'so long as their passports are countersigned at the Russian Embassy.' This officer was Reshid Bey, who was educated in Europe, but he spoke in French—a language in which

he could say anything, for not a soul understood him."

Moltke was terribly hampered in one of his journeys by the slowness and indolence of the Turkish official who accompanied him. "Without your champagne," he writes, "I should never have towed my fat Effendi so fast from Samsun to Karput. I always held out to him the prospect of a *Gumushbashi*, or 'Silver-Head,' if he rode well and we reached our quarters for the night. On a starry night," he continues, "I was standing on the ruins of the old Roman fortress of Zeugma. Deep down in a rocky ravine below me glittered the Euphrates, and the sound of its waters filled the peaceful evening. There did I see Cyrus and Alexander, Xenophon, Caesar, and Julian pass by me in the moonlight; from this very point had they seen the empire of Chosroes' dynasty across the river, and seen it exactly as I saw it, for here nature is of stone and unchangeable. So I determined to sacrifice to the memory of the great Roman people those golden grapes which they first introduced into Gaul, and which I had carried from the western to the eastern frontier of their broad empire. I hurled down the bottle which dived, danced, and slipped down the stream towards the Indian Ocean. You will be right, however, in surmising that I had first—emptied it . . . That bottle had only one fault—it was the last I had."

The following conversation will remind many of the interview between Kinglake's British traveller and the Pasha:—" . . . The next night I slept in the tent of a Turcoman chief. . . . After I had made myself as comfortable as I could, the chief, Osman Bey, came in and gave me a friendly greeting. When the influence of coffee and pipes had dispelled the silence in which such visits always begin, he asked for news from my Cimmerian home, much as we should question an inhabitant of the moon were he to fall like an aerolite on our planet. 'Had we got the sea with us?'

'Yes, and we take walks on it in the winter.' 'Did we grow much tobacco?' 'We fetched most of it from the New World.' 'Was it true that we cut off the ears and tails of our horses?' 'No, we only cut their tails.' 'Had we springs of flowing water?' 'Yes, except during a frost.' 'Had we any camels?' 'Yes, but they were only shown for money.' 'Did we grow lemons?' 'No.' 'Had we many buffaloes?' 'No.' He was nearly asking me whether the sun shone with us or whether we had nothing but gas. Meanwhile, and with a muttered 'Allah! Allah!' he suppressed the remark that my country must have been originally meant for polar bears."

At Nevsher, on the Kizil-Irmak, a personage named Kara Jehenna, or Black Hell, who had taken a leading part in the massacre of the Janissaries in 1826, refused either to receive Moltke or to give him horses. "I settled matters by walking straight up into his room, where his Hellish Majesty and I met like two men who are equally anxious to surrender no part of their dignity. . . . I took no notice of his presence, had my heavy boots pulled off by my servants, and then, covered as I was with every variety of soil, I marched up to the best seat in the room. It was only then that I saluted my host who, in order to give me a taste of his European manners, answered 'Addio! . . . 'What have you heard about me?' said he. 'That you are a good gunner and are called Black Hell.' It is not every one who would have taken this infernal sobriquet as a compliment, but it won my friend's heart. Breakfast and coffee were at once provided, and, in addition, most excellent horses, to the great delight of my Tartar." At Constantinople Moltke overheard some Turkish ladies criticising a party of Jewesses sitting near them in the Valley of Sweet Waters. ". . . The ladies were much shocked by the indecent exposure permitted by the Jewish veils, which actually showed the face from the eyebrows to the upper lip, and also by the fact that the

she-infidels were drinking brandy. 'Is that propriety?' asked a broad dame. 'Any decent woman would confine herself to a cup of coffee, a pipe of tobacco, *et voilà tout!*' I mention this for the information of ladies at home."

There were comic points even in the magnificent ceremonials of the Russian coronation:—" . . . After the Great bell of Ivan had recorded the hour, two richly-dressed heralds, with golden staves, tabards and helmets, issued from the Gate of the Redeemer . . . it was a great pity that one of them wore spectacles on his nose." Again at a service in the Chapel of Peterhof:—"The choir chanted a piece of the most impressive kind with a skill that was matchless. Composition and execution were alike unsurpassable. To my abject despair, a venerable Excellency behind me joined in the singing and was always out of tune, *sotto voce* it is true, but quite loud enough for my ears." A little later:—"We drove to the beautiful Smolnoi Church . . . near it are several palatial buildings for the reception of spinsters of noble birth. As, however, the youngest of them is, and indeed must be, forty years we did not stay there very long. . . ." Again:—"The fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul is said to contain the huge cash reserves which form the security for the paper money in circulation . . . But I did not count them

It is difficult to part from Moltke's Letters without citing the passage which he devotes to the Mosque of St. Sophia, and with which I shall conclude. Here again Kinglake's immortal description of the Sphinx presents a singular parallel in spirit and dignity:—"Memories cluster thickest about the temple which Constantine erected to the Divine Wisdom, and which still raises its limestone walls and leaden domes high above the last hill between the Propontis and the Golden Horn. There she still stands, the ancient Sophia. Like a venerable dame in a white robe and with her grey head resting on her mighty crutches, she gazes over the crowds that throng about her in the present, away to the land and sea in the distance. Deserted by her champions and her children, this Christian of a thousand years was forcibly converted to Islam. But she turns away from the grave of the Prophet and looks to the east at the face of the rising sun, to the south towards Ephesus, Antioch, Alexandria, Corinth, and the Redeemer's Grave, to the west which deserted her, and to the north whence she expects her deliverance. Fire and siege, riot, civil war and fanatical destruction, earthquakes, storms, and tempests have broken their strength against these walls which have received Christian, Heathen, and Mahomedan emperors beneath their arches."

HAROLD A. PERRY.

THE STRANGER IN THE HOUSE.

THE great characteristic of the present Session down to Whitsuntide has been its unparalleled dulness. Something of this is doubtless due to the disruption of the Irish party, for when they were in full fighting array there were often some lively afternoons and evenings, although the liveliness was not much to the taste of sticklers for Parliamentary etiquette and decorum. To see all Mr. Parnell's pack in full chase after the Irish Secretary, or endeavouring to disturb the bland serenity of Mr. Smith, was sport in which all the spectators could take an interest, from the Speaker himself to the attendant in the Strangers' Gallery, who is always on the watch for surreptitious opera-glasses. But gloom and depression have settled down upon the Irish benches, and crushed out every spark of Irish humour. When the Irishman is low-spirited he is the most melancholy animal alive. The Englishman goes on much as usual, dogged, obstinate, silent, perhaps a little sullen. The Irishman gives everything up until the dark hour passes over him. Mr. Sexton and Mr. Tim Healy are the only two of the once formidable band who have still any particle of the fighting spirit left in them. And even they are not what they were. They drag themselves to the fray because they feel they ought to be in it; but they strike at random, and their blows fall wide of the mark. Their task is not rendered lighter by the strange, fitful, phantom-like appearances of their former leader, coming and going like Banquo's ghost, and refusing to be "laid," though he has been duly exorcised with bell, book, and candle, and specially cursed by the Healy family into the bargain.

Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy may be

seen defending the Irish position with what spirit they have been able to summon up, when Mr. Parnell suddenly glides in and takes his seat between them. To the observant stranger up aloft he seems to have ascended from a trap-door, or to have emerged from the back of the scene, like the deceased Corsican brother. There is no doubt of the impression which he creates. There is a "movement of repulsion." Mr. Tim Healy folds his arms and looks stern, after the manner of Napoleon at St. Helena. Mr. Sexton betrays an awkwardness of manner which shows that he has not yet become quite accustomed to treat Mr. Parnell as a foe. Mr. Justin McCarthy, if he happens to be there, looks as though he would like to have a friendly chat with his old chief, provided no one were looking. One afternoon Mr. Parnell settled that difficulty by drawing near to Mr. McCarthy and entering into conversation with him, to the infinite disgust of the other rebels who have unanimously agreed never again to speak to the uncrowned king. Yet if Mr. Parnell were to meet one of them in a secluded spot, and hold out his hand, the probability is that the mutineer would seize it with gratitude and rejoicing. For though the deposed leader has been driven into a corner, and may never get out again, the magic of his influence has not yet wholly departed from him, and when he sends that wizard-like glance of his round his former vassals, they shrink from meeting his eye. Nothing in this uncertain world is half so uncertain as politics. The man who is down in the dust to-day may be at the top of the tree to-morrow. The cause which appears to be lost all at once comes to the front, and sweeps every-

thing before it. Some of Mr. Parnell's late supporters are fully alive to all this, and do not feel by any means sure that he will not turn the tables on them even yet. When he appears in their midst there is a flutter like that which goes on in a farmyard when a hawk is seen poised in the air just overhead. Even Dr. Tanner is cowed.

One of the strange things about this very queer Session is that Mr. Parnell is left entirely alone. He has some followers still left, but where are they? Colonel Nolan may usually be seen fidgeting about here and there, but he is by no means a master of Parliamentary tactics, as any observant person may have inferred from seeing him on one occasion leading the Parnellites into a formal division when there were only five of them to pass between the tellers. Mr. Parnell would doubtless be very glad to exchange Colonel Nolan for Mr. Sexton, and to throw another man or two in if that would clinch the bargain. But where is the genial Mr. Dick Power, a favourite with everybody, who was wont to summon the Parnellite army together whenever there was fighting to be done? He has never been to the House since the breach in the party became too wide ever to be closed. Probably he cannot bear to look on at the miserable sight of old friends stabbing each other. Where is Mr. John Redmond, an undeniably able man? Where is everybody who could help Mr. Parnell in his time of need? The deserted leader looks furtively from beneath the hat which is drawn over his brows, and sees only one or two second and third-rate henchmen who can be of little or no service to him. Then he rises, stalks past friends and foes without a word, and vanishes under the gallery, followed by the inquisitive eyes of Mr. Balfour, who even now is all attention the moment Mr. Parnell rises to speak. He is quite satisfied to take scraps and fragments of what the others say; but not the lightest of Mr. Parnell's words appears to escape his ear.

The nature of the work in which the House has been engaged is not calculated to kindle any enthusiasm in the ranks of either party. The Conservatives, as a body, came into Parliament pledged against any large measure of Land Purchase in Ireland, especially if it involved, directly or indirectly, the use of the national credit. They stormed against a measure of that kind when Mr. Gladstone proposed it, and many of them are now fully as much of opinion as they were then, that no further concessions ought to be made to Irish agitation in this direction. How can they be expected to render hearty and cordial assistance to the progress of a measure which differs from Mr. Gladstone's in form rather than in substance? It has been rare to see a full quorum in the House at any stage of the discussions in Committee. Under the stern discipline of party, men can be brought up to vote for principles which they have denounced with might and main, but they will chafe under their bonds, and secretly try to shuffle out of them. The Conservative party find themselves compelled by the hard necessity of their position—the position of holding office without a majority of their own—to carry out, piece by piece, Mr. Chamberlain's "unauthorised programme." They remain in power on condition of throwing overboard, one after the other, the old articles of their faith. Can it be supposed that men like Sir John Mowbray and Sir Walter Barttelot, repositories of the ancient traditions, perform their daily penance with a blithe heart? Of course Mr. Chamberlain is delighted. He looks on with a cynical smile while the country gentlemen of England are being thrust into the traces to drag his coach over the stony roads. He is quite content to have Lord Salisbury called Prime Minister so long as he pulls all the strings in the background. He enjoys the realities of power without any of its risks or responsibilities. His very manner in the House betrays his consciousness that he is master of the Tory battalions. If Mr. Balfour

is doing his work fairly well, Mr. Chamberlain sits for half an hour or so looking at him with cold approval, or shuts his eyes and imitates Lord Hartington's tranquil indifference to all that is going on. If Mr. Balfour stumbles, he crosses the floor of the House and whispers to him, or makes a sign for him to go behind the Speaker's chair for a brief consultation. He may perhaps condescend to say a few words himself, with that air of supreme satisfaction and of contempt for everybody else which endears him so much to his former political associates. That Mr. Balfour has stumbled more than once over this unmanageable Land Bill must have been obvious to Mr. Chamberlain as it is to the less vigilant stranger in the gallery. The Irish Secretary always seems bored to death—that is a part of the *rôle* which the papers long ago marked out for him, and he plays it to the life. But of late he has lost the art of making people think that he takes an interest in what he has in hand. He has made it perfectly clear that he knows very little about the Bill of which he is in charge, and cares less. Did he not declare on one occasion that he had but a very imperfect comprehension of an elaborate sub-section which he had himself moved—in his own words, that he only “understood it more or less”? Stretched out at full length, with his feet resting against the table, and weariness and disgust written in large characters all over his face, he has dragged his way through a Bill which he is well aware cannot possibly be a “final” measure. It can only prove, at the best, a stopgap to fill up the interval until new demands are made. Those demands will come, and they will have to be complied with, but the Conservative party will have disqualified themselves from raising any further objections to pledging British credit for enabling Irish tenants to become landowners. The same principle must be extended to England in due time. It is too tempting in itself to be lost sight of.

A man first of all gets a “fair rent” fixed—that is to say, he gets it reduced twenty or thirty per cent. Then he gets it further reduced by another twenty per cent., and on paying this lower rent for forty-nine years he becomes master of the freehold. Is anybody crazy enough to suppose that such a beautiful system as that will always be left as an exclusive privilege in the hands of the Irish? If it is to be conceded only to “revolution,” then we may depend upon it that the requisite qualification will in due time be supplied on this side St. George's Channel.

But there is still another cause of the long nightmare which has weighed so heavily upon the House this Session. It has been felt in former Sessions of this Parliament, and it arises primarily from the peculiar nature of the leadership under which the House is now placed. There is a certain kind of safety in mediocrity, but the most buoyant spirits will sink under incessant contact with it. They say that Lord North was a very dull man, although contemporary testimony does not corroborate that impression. At any rate, we who are now alive never saw Lord North, while we have seen Mr. W. H. Smith. No one would wish to say an unkind word of the great “utility man” of the Tory party—the man who has been Secretary of State for War, First Lord of the Admiralty, Chief Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, First Lord of the Treasury, Leader of the House of Commons—in short, who has walked with perfect complacency into every office that was indicated to him. Head of the Army, Head of the Navy, Chief of the House of Commons, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports—surely here is a career worthy the study of those who desire to know how to get on in the world with very moderate abilities. There is nothing like it in English political history. What would one not give to have it summed up by the Disraeli of old days? Did he not compress the history of Lord Goderich into half a

line—"the troubled phantom of Lord Goderich crossed the stage"! A dozen "Lives" of poor Lord Goderich could not tell the story better. One would like to see the same masterly hand touch off Mr. Smith.

From my corner in the gallery, which I have occupied off and on a good many years, I have watched Lord Palmerston leading the House of Commons, and his method of doing his work often comes back to my mind when I survey Mr. Smith's smiling countenance. Lord Palmerston was blunt and straightforward, not an orator, not given to indulgence in oratorical flourishes or gaudy speeches, but always going straight to the mark. He was brief, pungent, emphatic, but never dull. Then there was Disraeli, always original, always saying or doing something which nobody expected. "Dizzy" was the first man asked for by every one who came into the Strangers' Gallery for the first time. Sometimes he would put his eye-glass up and look steadily at the clock, and then we had a good view of the Disraelian curl hanging over the forehead, and of the sallow face beneath, with its impenetrable aspect, and its apparent unconsciousness that any one was gazing at it. Perhaps Mr. Disraeli had his faults: it is not worth while raising that discussion just now; but no one can say that he was dull. The skies then were always in motion; lightnings often flashed around them, and sometimes there were sudden darkness and the crash of a storm. Upon the whole, that also was a man whose like we shall probably never see again.

Then there was Mr. Gladstone. Some people say that he has no sense of humour, and it may be so, although I have heard him say things which in other people would be called humorous. Not long ago he was speaking in the House when Mr. Goschen rather hastily and vehemently interrupted him. Mr. Gladstone quietly said, "I was not quite prepared for this interruption," and then with an air of meek resignation he added, "I suppose it is a part

of the maintenance of the Union." But, whether humorous or not, would any man in his senses dream of calling him dull? He may be anything else you please, but he cannot be that. His readiness and promptness, the quickness of his repartee, his incomparable way of putting things, the manner so skilfully adapted to every shifting mood and temper of the House, the grace and felicity of his language, his perfect adaptation to circumstances—all these qualities, not to mention his extraordinary eloquence, would have sufficed to render Mr. Gladstone's leadership memorable in Parliamentary history. As for his politics and his policy, I leave others to wrangle over these things. I, a mere outside observer, have nothing to do with them. Of one thing I am sure, and it is that the slipshod manners and customs and style of the present day will not permit of the rise in Parliament of another Gladstone. That kind of man belongs to the past.

It appears, then, that mediocrity was not always considered the one thing needful for Parliamentary leadership. Men have achieved distinction without it. But now it is an essential part of the equipment of any man who wishes advancement in politics. It is not at all surprising that a Prime Minister should have no wish to embarrass himself with too many clever men. It must be a convenience in many respects to have to do with people who will not obtrude their own opinions, but be content to take them on the authority of the head of the Cabinet. Mr. Disraeli understood that, and therefore he took care to surround himself in the House of Commons with commonplace persons—such men as Ward Hunt, Selator Booth, and others who need not be mentioned, and some of whom, thanks to their mediocrity, are in office to-day. Lord Salisbury, at the outset of his present administration, had to do with one clever man, and we cannot wonder if he has no desire whatever to repeat the experience. But then it is possible to have

plenty of cleverness without any principle or judgment, and it may have been Lord Salisbury's bad luck to hit upon a colleague of that description. Naturally enough, he found rest and peace in the society of estimable persons like Lord Cross, Lord Knutsford, Mr. Smith, Baron de Worms, and so forth. Mr. Balfour was too loyal to be troublesome, and Mr. Goschen was too well pleased with obtaining the position for which he had been struggling all his life to be otherwise than docile. So they all jog along well satisfied with themselves and the world, marvelling sometimes how in the name of all that is wonderful they have become what they are. Surely there are some bright spirits in the Cabinet who cannot even to this day have recovered from their astonishment at finding themselves in Downing Street. The outer world has not yet solved the riddle.

The things, we know, are neither rich
nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got
there.

What would it matter about having a Ministry of mediocrities, with three or four brilliant exceptions, if the business of the country got well done? But that is the very thing that does not happen under the present Administration. Every Session of this Parliament has been the same. The beginning has been confusion, the middle a scene of turmoil and bitter recriminations, the end mere Chaos and old Night. Even if there had been no obstruction and no unnecessary delay, the House of Commons could not possibly have got through the work provided for it by the leader, who, it is popularly supposed, must at the very least be a highly capable man of business. Get a reputation for certain qualities, and it matters little whether you possess those qualities or not; the world will persist in seeing them in everything you do. Nothing in the least degree resembling good management has been displayed in the

present Parliament. Hence we have seen the confiscation of the time hitherto allotted to Private Members, the jugglery of "morning sittings," involving a certain "count out" at night, autumn sessions, great schemes produced late in the session sufficient to occupy the whole of that session, such as the Licensing proposals last year and Free Education this. I wonder whether any watchful and discreet person, not a violent partisan of either side, is preparing notes for a perfectly candid and truthful history of the present Administration. It would be a very valuable contribution to the political records of the time, although it might not confirm the popular estimate of several eminent and renowned "statesmen."

One of the great secrets of Mr. Smith's success is that he never quarrels with the House of Commons. Either he lets it have its own way, or he contrives to give it the impression that he means to do so. He does not seek to drive it. Mr. Goschen has not acquired this art, and consequently he and the House very soon get to loggerheads. His manner is harsh and dictatorial; he assumes the tone of a ruler who will brook no contradiction or opposition. The House of Commons will not stand that from anybody. It may be easily cajoled, but it cannot be forced. Mr. Smith waits upon it in the attitude of one who is anxious to carry out its wishes, and to receive any orders it chooses to give. He may, indeed, venture to remind Hon. Members that there is such a thing as duty to Sovereign and country to be considered, but having gone so far as that, he leaves the disposal of events entirely in the hands of his most approved good masters. He never contradicts or snubs anybody, unless it has been made quite clear that the House looks to him to administer some reproof of the kind to an erring brother. Even then, Mr. Smith conveys the needful lesson with a deprecatory wave of the hand and a beaming smile. Mr. Goschen is not cut out for this sort of

work, and Mr. Balfour is still less adapted for it. During the closing hours before the Whitsuntide recess the Chancellor of the Exchequer was called upon to lead, the Lord Warden having very wisely gone to Italy. Mr. Goschen nearly contrived to stir up strife which might have caused a great deal of mischief. He has a knack of rubbing the House the wrong way. The Cardinal who gets elected Pope is sometimes the one who excites the fewest jealousies and animosities. It is on the same principle that the leadership of the House of Commons was disposed of when Lord Randolph Churchill threw away the most magnificent chances a man ever had in this world. And the House has never regretted the change.

The truth is, everything in the Lower House is at present in a transition state. The "new era" must come ere long, and the changes of the last sixty years will be as nothing to those which will then pass over the political world. As I look down upon the actors in the drama now approaching the last act, it often occurs to me that few of them are destined to remain in their present engagements. Family influences will wax fainter and still more faint; the old "claims" will be disregarded. The Conservatives have ceased to "conserve." The Liberals are broken up. One great man towers above everybody else in the House, but he is in his eighty-second year. What sort of a party has he at his back? An unruly mob, divided into half-a-dozen factions, each with two or three persons pushing, struggling, and fighting to lead it. These factions at times take a delight in exhibiting open insubordination towards their distinguished leader and defiance of his authority. I have seen him appeal to them very earnestly to vote with him on a particular question concerning which his vast experience rendered him a safe guide, and with studied discourtesy they have marched ostentatiously into the opposite lobby and voted against him. On a certain special occasion Mr. Gladstone's mor-

tification and disappointment at the treatment he had received from his own followers were too plain to be concealed. If the veteran of public life, with his immense claims upon his party, cannot keep in order Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Storey, Dr. this and Colonel the other and Sir something else, who in the world will be able to do it? Is Mr. John Morley eager to try his hand at such an undertaking? Could Sir William Harcourt succeed where Mr. Gladstone has failed? Pretty nearly every man in the Liberal party of the present day wants to be his own leader. If they were in office the pressure of the constituencies might tend to keep them in their proper places. But the conditions are such as to give rise to no little uneasiness in the minds of the real leaders.

As for the week which preceded the Whitsuntide holidays, few who were present in the House are likely to forget it. The business before the House led it deeper and deeper into the abysses of dulness; the expectation of being ill filled every one with despondency. Mr. Palgrave, the chief clerk, was left alone in his glory; great gaps appeared in the Reporters' Gallery; no ladies ventured into the Chamber; rows of empty benches on both sides met the eye. Poor Mr. Plunkett, the First Commissioner of Works, whenever he showed himself was surrounded with an angry crowd of Members casting at him words of obloquy for permitting the Russian or Chinese microbe to obtain complete mastery in the Palace of Westminster. Why Mr. Plunkett did not have the presence of mind to take the influenza himself, and so obtain a plausible pretext for withdrawing from the scene, he alone can tell. It is to be hoped there will be a change for the better in all respects ere the long-suffering legislature has advanced much further with its labours. Yet there is another shadow already falling upon it. The odious duty of expelling a Member has had to be performed once, and it will have to be repeated. The

Government will not attempt to shield one of its own supporters who has fled from justice in circumstances not even to be mentioned here. There are Private Members who would take the matter up if the Ministry did not, for the feeling is becoming general that outrageous and abominable scandals connected with Members of Parliament must no longer be tolerated. What a Session, then, is this likely to be in history!—two Members expelled for vile misconduct, a thing never recorded before; a general *auto da fê* of principles and professions once ten-

aciously defended, the struggle for office becoming more and more desperate, until almost all the former landmarks have been destroyed, and both of the historic parties preparing to bid anything and everything for votes at the next election! Those who are in the very thick of this contest are probably so deeply absorbed in the probable issue as to be all but insensible to every other consideration. But we, the spectators, cannot notice all that is going on or is in preparation without some very serious misgivings.